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The Love-Knot

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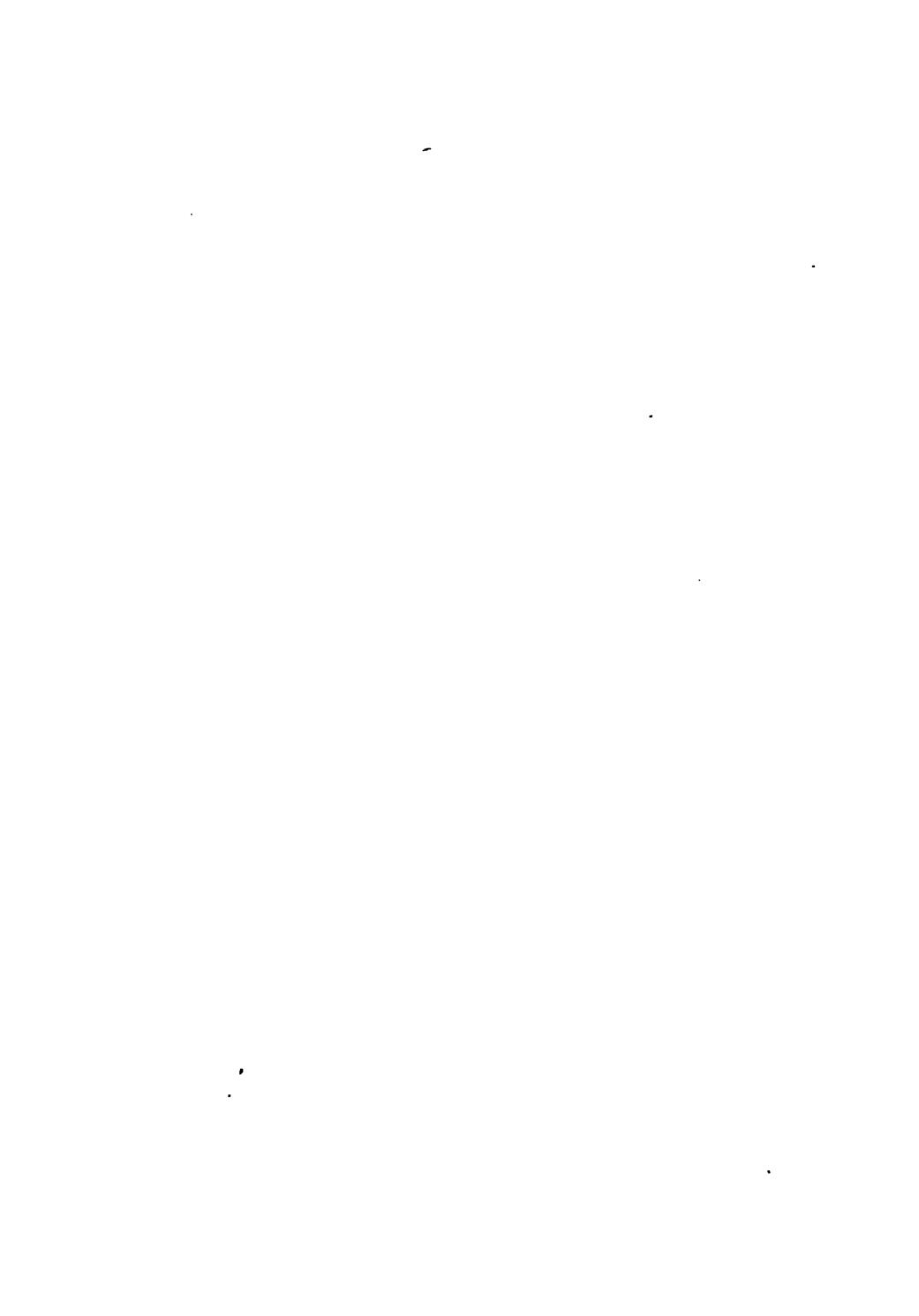
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1918





The Love-Knot.



LOUIS N. PARKER.





THE LOVE-KNOT.



AN ORIGINAL PLAY IN FOUR ACTS.

BY

LOUIS N. PARKER.

—
SHERBORNE :

J. C. SAWTELL, THE PARADE.

1889.

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LOUIS N. PARKER, Sherborne, Dorset.

The Author reserves the right of composing the
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Persons.

NOEL MISTRAL

THE CITIZEN FERRAND, heretofore MARQUIS FERRAND OF
CHATEAUBEL.

THE ABBE de COLIBRI

MONSIEUR DUJARDIN

CITIZEN DUHAMEL

CITIZEN CHAUFFIN, Captain of the National Guards

CASTELLAN }
COSTALDE } Marseillese
BENIZET }

CHEPY }
BRUIN } Judges at La Force
GRISSET }

BAPTISTE, Gaoler in La Force

JULES, a waiter

GREGOIRE, Major-domo to Estelle de Beaulieu

PEDLAR

1st GENTLEMAN

1st REPUBLICAN

2nd REPUBLICAN

OLD PRISONER

THE MAN IN BLUE

BOY

THE MARCHIONESS ESTELLE DE BEAULIEU

THE MARCHIONESS of CARABAS

MADAME LE NORMAND

MADAME BAUDOUIN, Companion to Estelle

CORA

SUZETTE

Guests, Republicans, Jury, Guards, Prisoners, Mob, Footmen, etc.

TIME: from 8 o'clock on the evening of Sept. 2, 1792 till 6 the next
morning.

PLACE: Paris.

THE LOVE-KNOT.

ACT I.

SCENE: *A magnificent double salon at Estelle's. C. Folding-doors. R. Three lofty windows. L. The second drawing-room, of which only a part is seen; it is divided from the first by pillars. In the second Drawing-room a gallery for musicians. Rich furniture Louis XIV. Evening. Candles. As the curtain rises Gregoire is giving final directions to a small army of footmen; these bow ceremoniously and go out by several exits. One opens door C. for Madame Baudouin.*

Gregoire. Ah, Madame Baudouin! Is our gracious mistress ready?

Baudouin. She will be here in a moment, good Gregoire. Lud, how weary I am! (*sinks into a chair*).

Gregoire. It has been a trying day for Madame.

Baudouin. I have nothing but trying days. Who, I ask, would have the care of a young and lovely widow thrust upon her?—for she is young—

Gregoire. As Hebe!

Baudouin. And lovely—

Gregoire. As Venus!

Baudouin. Why, you know your goddesses by heart!

Gregoire. 'Tis a trick I have learnt from the fashionable footmen.

Baudouin. That's well; we need a little polish.

Gregoire. We are a trifle rusty.

Baudouin. What else can you expect after a whole year of the terrible Beaulieu?

Gregoire. Don't speak of it, Madame. No society—

Baudouin. Excepting horses—

Gregoire. And dogs—

Baudouin. And the village priest.

Gregoire. Such a contrast to previous years!

Baudouin. I vow, I swoon at the thought! The heavenly Versailles!

Gregoire. The Queen!

Baudouin. The King!

Gregoire. God save him !

Baudouin. 'Sh ! you forget !—

Gregoire. N-n-n-no ; I meant : Off with his head !

Baudouin. The balls and feasts !

Gregoire. The marquis !

Baudouin. I vow, I had forgotten him ! Well, he is well out of the way.

Gregoire. And we have mourned a year.

Baudouin. And now we come to Paris and start fresh.

Gregoire. And if wealth, youth, and beauty are any help, you will succeed.

Baudouin. I protest, you flatter ; I have but little wealth.

Gregoire. I was speaking of the Marchioness.

Baudouin. Insolent ! There, there,—do the men know their duties ?

Gregoire. Better than I do, Madame.

Baudouin. You *are* very provincial, my good creature ; but don't let that trouble you. An old servant is the fashionable thing.

Gregoire. Madame is very good.

Baudouin. Try to look as old as possible. Remember, 'tis our first reception since our widowhood, and we must make a good impression.

Gregoire. Here is the Marchioness !

(Enter *Estelle*. *Madame Baudouin rises and rushes at her*).

Baudouin. Dear child ! How lovely you look !

Estelle. Do I really, good Baudouin ? Do I really ?—but *really* ?

Baudouin. Sure, I never saw such a complexion !

Estelle. You are a handsome old darling for saying so.

Baudouin. Such fire in your eyes !

Estelle. I am so excited, my good soul ! At last we have come to life again !

Baudouin. Hush ! Don't let anyone else hear you say such things. You must subdue your excitement, put on a slight sadness, a little interesting melancholy.

Estelle. You wise dear ! I cannot look melancholy if I do not feel so.

Baudouin. Tut, tut, tut ! What was the use of your life at court, if you have not learnt these little arts ?

Estelle. Don't speak to me of my life at court. Nobody looked anything there. We all wore masks. Everybody looked alike, and we all looked indifferent. Thank the saints, we are rid of that!

Baudouin. My dear child, you shock me! You must never mention the saints among people of quality! They are out of date.

Gregoire (at door C.) The musicians wait upon Madame.

Estelle. Give them some supper, and then show them to the gallery. (*Excitedly*) Oh, Baudouin!

Baudouin. Well, child, what is it?

Estelle. Do you think I might ask them—before anybody comes—to play, to play—a jig?

Baudouin. A jig?

Estelle. Yes! a jig, jig, jig! I should dearly love to dance it!

Baudouin. My dear! are you crazy? Dance a jig, alone?

Estelle (seizing her hands, and swinging her round). No! with you, you dear soul! Shall I?

Baudouin. The saints preserve us!

Estelle. They can't! they're out of date!

Baudouin. Thou madcap!

Estelle (to Gregoire). Have the actors come?

Gregoire. They are dressing, Madame. (*exit C.*)

Estelle. Wasn't it a delicious idea to have a comedy?

Baudouin. It was a most extravagant one. But now come and sit here by me, and let me talk to you seriously.

Estelle. What else have you been doing all the evening? (*sits beside Madame Baudouin.*)

Baudouin. I cannot understand you of late; you have changed; you are so restless.

Estelle. You give me the megrims when you begin to talk like that. Where is the list of guests?

Baudouin (producing a list). Here is my private list; what can you want of it?

Estelle (taking it from her). I want to see it. Are all these people coming?

Baudouin. All. Ah, they are sadly mixed!

Estelle. I hope so. A reception should be like a saiad; it should contain a little of everything. Now, let

me see. (*Reads*) M-m-m—the Marchioness of Carabas, dear old owl—m-m-m—The citizen Duhamel, a very goose—Madame Le Normand, all eyes, like a peacock—The Abbé de Colibri, our canary bird—oh ! I am glad he is coming !—the funny little man !

Baudouin. Funny ! he is a great poet ! funny, indeed !

Estelle. Oh, I forgot ! Thou dear romantic soul !—but, fie ! fie ! he is an abbé !

Baudouin. He is in secular orders ; the Church may lose him,

Estelle. Then you would both be the gainers. Nay, I wish you joy, so don't get cross. (*Reads*) The citizen Ferrand, heretofore Marquis of Chateaubel.

Baudouin. Ah ! do you stop there ? Are your eyes rivetted ?

Estelle (*pensively*). How can a man cast off his title ? *heretofore Marquis !*

Baudouin. He did it to serve his country. He is a devoted patriot—and a devoted lover.

Estelle (*sighing*). Well !—(*reads*) The citizen Noël Mistral—

Baudouin. Heretofore son of our bailiff, and now ballad-monger ! I wonder, child, you should ask such trash to your house.

Estelle. Madame Baudouin, be pleased to reserve your opinion of my guests till I ask for it. Noël Mistral is a distinguished man. In the times we live in, there is no height to which he may not aspire.

Baudouin. There, there, there—

Estelle. You peevish thing ! he is the flavouring in my salad.

Baudouin. Yes, the garlic.

Estelle (*stamping her foot*). He is the poet of the revolution.

Baudouin. Poet of the fiddlesticks ! The idea of comparing him with the sweet abbé !

Estelle. That idea never entered my head,

Baudouin. This Mistral is an ill wind that will blow you no good. He is far too enterprizing. If there is no height to which he may not aspire, take care he does not aspire to you !

Estelle. Madame Baudouin !

Baudouin. Yes ! I wish the Marquis could see him devouring you with his eyes, as I have seen him ; I warrant he'd trounce him soundly.

Gregoire (at door C.) The Marquis Ferrand—

Ferrand, entering stops and gives Gregoire a look.

Gregoire (correcting himself). The citizen Ferrand.

Ferrand. (advancing, and bowing low.) Marchioness ! *(kisses her hand)* Madame Baudouin, your servant. Beauty, guarded by Wisdom !

Estelle. Wisdom is monstrous cross to night, Marquis.

Baudouin. She has had a struggle with Folly, and is glad to resign her guardianship (*rises*.)

Ferrand. May I have the sad satisfaction of handing Wisdom to the door ?

Baudouin. You are vastly obleeging.

Ferrand (aside to Baudouin). Have you spoken for me ?

Baudouin. She is impracticable to night.

Ferrand. Time presses. (*Elaborate bows* ; *exit Mad. Baudouin*.)

Estelle. You are early, Marquis.

Ferrand. I came on the wings of love. Have you considered my letter ? Have you an answer for me ?

Estelle. The answer will disappoint you.

Ferrand. Oh, do not give it me, then !

Estelle. Nay, for silence gives consent, and I—

Ferrand. Do not say you refuse ! you *cannot* refuse !

Estelle. *Cannot* ?

Ferrand. Forgive me. There my impatience spoke. But you will not refuse. Is my life nothing to you ? Do you wish to see me perish at your feet ?

Estelle. I could almost think myself once more at Court. That was quite in the old style.

Ferrand. Teach me to speak so that I may move you. What can I try ?

Estelle. I don't know. I fear I am past moving. But in the case of another woman I should advise you to try—nature.

Ferrand. I fail to catch your meaning.

Estelle. I daresay. I scarce know what I mean myself. (*indicating seat beside her*) Come, I will listen to

you. What can you urge in your own favour ?

Ferrand (*seizing her hand*) I can urge that I love you with all my being !

Estelle (*withdrawing her hand*). That hurts. You make love like a tiger. Must I marry you because you love me ? Then some women would have six husbands.

Ferrand. Is your heart a stone ? Let me, then, appeal to your reason. You would not be marrying a nonentity : I am Citizen Ferrand.

Estelle. I know. Heretofore Marquis of Chateaubel. Heretofore Marquis. How can a man cast off his title ?

Ferrand. I was ruined ; and when the Court was broken up beggary stared me in the face. I saw that the days of the nobility were numbered, and I embraced the cause of the people. I have succeeded beyond all my hopes—the people are such fools ! Which is more honourable ? to remain Marquis of Chateaubel, and trudge from door to door in London, giving dancing, lessons, or to become Citizen Ferrand, Member of the Committee of Public Safety, Treasurer of the Republic, surnamed The Friend of the People ?

Estelle. The people are such fools !

Ferrand. If you marry me, there is nothing which I may not achieve.

Estelle. Are you urging these things in your favour ?

Ferrand. With the help of your vast wealth we should have France under our feet.

Estelle. Supposing the King's friends were successful ?

Ferrand. That is impossible. But, granting they were, with your wealth and a little diplomacy, I should once more be a mighty lord.

Estelle. It is a pity you cannot marry my estate.

Ferrand. You are unjust. I am ambitious. I see glory and power within my reach, and I value your wealth rightly for the irresistible force it would give me ; but I love you, I love you, Estelle, with all my soul. I can say no more. Will you have me ?

Estelle. I can see no reason why I should.

Ferrand. Do you refuse ?

Estelle. I can see no reason why I should.

Ferrand. Then you accept ?

Estelle. I don't know. I said just now, I don't know what I mean or what I want. Give me the evening; at present I am indifferent to everything, and just as willing to say yes, as to say no.

Ferrand. Then say yes!

Estelle. No.

(Enter Madame Baudouin).

Baudouin. Your guests are arriving—pardon me for disturbing you, citizen marquis. Now, dear child, deportment! Pray, pray compose your features. Marquis, do entreat her to compose her features.

Estelle. What expression shall they wear?

Baudouin. A judiciously mingled one, my sweetheart; lassitude, melancholy, and indifference.

Estelle. All those will come of themselves; but, oh Baudouin! I wish we had danced that jig!

Gregoire (announcing). The citizen Duhamel!

Enter Duhamel. *Old, fat, and cringing.*

Duhamel. Marchioness, I kiss your hand. The eye sinks abashed before such beauty. Citizen Ferrand, your most humble servant.

Ferrand. I cannot allow that phrase, citizen; we are all equals now.

Duhamel. And he a Marquis! What zeal! What patriotism!

Gregoire (announcing). The Marchioness of Carabas!

Enter the Marchioness of Carabas, *a courtly old lady.*

Elaborate curtsies between her and Estelle.

Carabas. Marchioness, your most obedient—

Estelle. Marchioness—

Ferrand (bowing). Madame—

Carabas (staring at him through lorgnette). Ah—who is this—person?

Estelle. Surely you know the Citizen—Ferrand?

Carabas. I used to know the Marquis Ferrand of Chateaubel—I do not know any citizens.

Ferrand (with a low bow.) That is one of the privileges I have gained by resigning my title. (takes out a pocket-book, makes a note, and closes the book with a snap.)

Miscellaneous guests arrive at intervals; some enter through the side room, until the rooms are full. Footmen arrange card tables,

at which groups seat themselves. Refreshments are handed round. The musicians appear in the gallery and tune their instruments.

Gregoire (announcing) Madame Le Normand.

Enter Madame Le Normand, young and coquettish. Ceremony as before.

Le Normand. I protest, Marchioness, only your charming self could have drawn me out of my own house.

Estelle. Why, Madame ?

La Chesnais. The streets are disturbed ; the mob grows insolent. Oh, Monsieur Duhamel, had I known you were coming, I should have placed myself under your protection.

Duhamel. Charmed—charmed—Gad ! “Monsieur !” What wit ! what refinement !

Ferrand. Do you expect many more ?

Estelle. I have asked all Paris.

Ferrand. I see no one of distinction.

Estelle. I am to have the Abbé de Colibri, and—

Ferrand. And ?

Estelle. Noël Mistral.

Ferrand. Mistral ? what is that ?—oh, the playwright ! Faith, you will be accused of dilettantism ! Well, well, we must choose our company with a little more discrimination by and by.

Estelle. You would shut out the Marchioness of Carabas ?

Ferrand. There will be no need.

Gregoire (announcing) The Citizen Dujardin.

Enter Dujardin, old and aristocratic. He glares at Gregoire.

Dujardin. Monsieur Dujardin, fellow !

Ferrand. Eh ?

Dujardin (to Estelle.) Marchioness, your slave. Ah, the Marquis ! your servant, sir.

Ferrand. Pardon me, *Citizen* ; I am *Citizen Ferrand*.

Dujardin. A very good joke, sir ; I swear, an excellent joke ; but you cannot do it, Marquis.

Ferrand. Sir ?

Dujardin. A gentleman once, a gentleman always, however you disguise the fact.

Ferrand. I protest !—

Dujardin (taking snuff.) Bah ! I know,—policy—mum !

Ferrand makes another note in his pocket-book.

Gregoire (announcing) The Abbé de Colibri

Great commotion. The ladies all rush to the door and surround the Abbé

Chorus. The God-like Abbé! now we shall hear news! The sweet Abbé!

Enter the Abbé de Colibri. Small, dapper, of uncertain age, exquisitely dressed, affected speech.

Abbé. Now, now, now! I protest, fair nymphs; what? would you tear me in pieces?

Ferrand. The modern Orpheus, massacred by the modern Bacchantes!

Abbé. I vow to Gad, Marquis—pardon me—Citizen Ferrand—a pretty conceit.

Ladies. What news?

Abbé. Alas! where can I find news? would you have the latest scandal from the market? or a drayman's quip? or the celebrated retort of the fish-fag to the chimney-sweep?

Chorus. The idea!

Abbé. Where else shall I find a new thing? The court is dead, and wit died with it. Jupiter is dethroned, and Olympus scattered.

Estelle. You are scarcely complimentary.

Abbé. Nay, this is a fragment of it. Here Venus and the Graces have found a refuge.

Estelle. And you are our Apollo.

Abbé. I vow you flatter me! Yet, 'tis true the Muses sometimes smile upon me.

Ferrand. Have they smiled lately?

Abbé. Only this morning, while my fellow was dressing my periwig, a fancy entered my head.

Estelle. Shall we be favoured?

Abbé. It was inspired by you.

Estelle. How charming! May we hear?

Abbé. Nay, in faith, Marchioness, it is but a trifle—I vow to Gad, a very trifle.

Ferrand. A trifle! written upon our gracious hostess!

Abbé. When I say a trifle, you must not misunderstand me. A pearl is a trifle, yet 'tis pleasing in a lady's ear. My poem—I say no more.

Ferrand. I am told a pearl is the result of sickness on the part of its author ; is your poem due to the same cause !

Abbé. Sir, you are pleased to be facetious. Yet, it may be so indeed : love-sickness. Cupid, the little laughter, breaks my sleep ; awake I remember, remembering I sigh, my sighs I put upon paper—

Ferrand. And the reader sighs, sleeps, and forgets ; the circle is complete.

Abbé. Marchioness, will you judge between us ?

Estelle. Which is the accused ?

Abbé. The Citizen Ferrand, of scoffing at the Muses.

Ferrand. Nay, the Abbé de Colibri, of abusing their good nature.

Estelle. The Abbé de Colibri is on his defence ; let me hear his poem. Here are the jury.

Abbé. I demur ! The jury are not all lovers ; my words will fall on deaf ears.

Ferrand. Those at least will be in your favour.

Estelle. Not so. The jury are qualified ; they all have been, are, or will be, lovers.

Abbé. I submit. A moment's silence, if you please.

The guests group themselves round him.

Abbé. You must remember, the poem is an impromptu ; a little thing dashed off. I call it "The Theft."

Ferrand. Doubtless appropriate.

Abbé (in the centre of an admiring circle.)

Within a grove, as Strephon sought his sheep,
He chanced on Chloë, lying there asleep ;
About her sportive Cupids held their play,
And watched her slumber on that summer day ;
One little rogue sent an envenomed dart
Straight to the centre of our shepherd's heart :
He kneels beside the nymph and steals a kiss,
But ah ! he dearly rues the transient bliss !
Fair Chloë wakes, and from her limpid eyes
Shoots one cross look, and hapless Strephon dies !

Chorus. Ravishing !—delicious !—inconceivable !—
" Limpid eyes " !—God-like !

1st Gentleman (to Estelle.) Marchioness, the musicians are about to play a minuet; may I crave the honor of your hand?

Estelle joins the minuet, which is danced during the ensuing dialogue.

Le Normand (to Ferrand) I protest, I perish with fear!

Ferrand. Why, Madame, what disturbs you?

Le Normand. Ah, you can tell us the truth.

Ferrand. I am your Servant.

Le Normand. This dear Marquis! always so obliging!

Ferrand. I pray you not Marquis:—Citizen.

Le Normand. Faugh! the ugly word!

Dujardin. Hm! you must use ugly words to conjure with.

Ferrand. Sir?

Dujardin (offering snuff box.) Do you?

Ferrand (half turning from him.) Ah, bah!

Dujardin (enjoying his pinch.) Ha! he sneezes at my snuff!

Ferrand (lightly.) Let me tell you, sir, that is a dangerous habit just now.

Dujardin. I do not take you.

Ferrand. It savors of the aristocrat, and is apt to make you sneeze your head off.

Dujardin (enjoying his pinch all the more.) Oh, very good, very good!

Le Normand. But you have not answered my question

Ferrand. I failed to catch it.

Le Normand. Is it true that the royalists are plotting in their prisons?

Ferrand. I don't know whether it is true, but it is quite possible. They have little else to do.

Le Normand. Then we are all undone.

Ferrand. Why, how so?

Le Normand. If they burst upon us like a swollen stream!

Ferrand. It is easy to plot in prison: it is monstrous hard to get out of prison with your plot.

Le Normand. How vastly comforting!

Ferrand. For those who are out.

Duhamel (to Dujardin) What is your news?

Dujardin. I have seen a comical sight. Picture to yourself five hundred ragamuffins who have marched all the way from Marseilles!

Le Normand. How inconceivably droll!

Dujardin. Ay, but what do the fellows want?

Ferrand. They say they have come to help their brothers in Paris.

Dujardin. Brothers! I'm sick of the word. 'Sblood, sir! do I look like the brother of that lackey yonder?

Le Normand. Lud! I swoon at the thought!

Duhamel. Nay, it cannot affect us if the mob choose to call each other brothers. We are not of the mob.

Ferrand. What if the mob insist on being your brothers?

Dujardin. They can't, sir! it's a question of blood.

Ferrand. So you may find.

Abbé. Hem! There is an epigram to be made of that:—

“When Father Adam delved in Eden’s Grove”—

Ferrand. Well, Sir?

Abbé. Nay, the Graces have routed the Muses! but 'tis a pretty line, “When Father Adam”—

Ferrand. I have heard something similar—

Abbé. 'Tis very likely; my best ideas are always stolen.

Ferrand. 'Tis honest of you to say so.

Abbé. I mean—

Dujardin. You have taken us back to Adam, Abbé, but I go farther, and say we have touched chaos.

Abbé. I vow to Gad! a pretty conceit.

Dujardin. The enemy at Verdun, the people rising on every side—

Abbé. Hem!

‘Οι πολλοί have risen,
And march to the prison.

Le Normand. Fie, Abbé! a familiar style!

Abbé. Pardon me fair critic; 'tis what we call macaronic: apt for light matter.

Duhamel. Gad! you'll find it no light matter if the people do rise.

Dujardin. A parcel of thieves and cut-throats! Who is safe? What is to stop them? Zounds, sir! why shouldn't they plunder the treasury, if they have a mind to?

Ferrand. Be at ease on that score, citizen; the treasury is well guarded; only I have the pass-word, and the keys of the strong-room are in my keeping.

Dujardin. 'Slife, sir! the government puts faith in you.

Ferrand. Which I try to deserve.

Le Normand. Marquis,—citizen, then—promise me one thing.

Ferrand. What is there I can refuse you?

Le Normand. Promise, that if there is any more trouble in Paris, you will give me a permit to leave it.

Ferrand. Nay, that is cruel!—to force me to sign my own death-warrant!

Le Normand. You are delicious; but promise.

Dujardin (to *Duhamel*). Can he do that?

Duhamel. He can do anything.

Abbé. Gad! perhaps he would accept a dedication!

Gregoire (announcing) The citizen Noël Mistral!

Enter *Noel*. *Commotion among the guests, some of whom surround him.*

Dujardin. Who is that?

Duhamel. Don't you know him? That's the New Man.

Dujardin. The?—

Duhamel. The New Man. Did you not see "Margery's Marriage"?

Dujardin. The Comedy?

Duhamel. The Comedy which shook the throne with its laughter.

Dujardin. What had he to do with it?

Duhamel. He was its author.

Dujardin. What! is that the Mistral?

Abbé (in conversation with *Mad. Baudouin*.) He is, to be sure, monstrous tall.

Baudouin. He is a vastly pretty fellow,—very dangerous.

Abbé. Hm, hm, I cannot say I admire vastly pretty fellows.

Baudouin. I vow you are jealous.

Abbé. What, has he dared look at you?

Baudouin. I should like to see him!

Abbé. If he did, he should get his deserts.

Baudouin. Why should you be vexed?

Abbé. Do you forget my hopes?

Baudouin. No; but I remember your cloth.

Abbé. But if I remove the cloth?—

Baudouin. You may hope for your deserts.

Abbé. Angel!

Baudouin. We are observed.—They say he is so clever, so many-sided. Have you heard him sing?

Abbé. Ye—es.

Baudouin. All his own music, you know.

Abbé. By courtesy.

Baudouin. By courtesy?

Abbé. Of the original owners from whom it is borrowed.

Baudouin. I swear you are malicious, I will not listen to you.

Abbé. If you will pretend not to listen, I will say bold things, I have not the courage to when you do.

Baudouin. Consider me deaf.

Estelle (coming out of inner room.) Citizen Mistral, I am indeed honoured.

Noël (bending low and kissing the tips of her fingers) Marchioness!—

Carabas. Is this the Mistral?

Estelle. It is.

Carabas. Pray present him. I have read your poems, sir; I have heard of your improvisation, and I saw your comedy. Vastly witty, but prodigiously wicked. Pity you are not on the right side.

Noël. Marchioness, I never regretted it, till now.

Carabas. Why, the monster has manners! you are charming; hand me to a chair (*perceiving Ferrand*) I respect sincerity: I despise turncoats.

Ferrand takes out his pocket-book, writes, and closes it with a snap, as before.

Carabas. I hear some of your countrymen have favoured us with a visit.

Noël (gazing at Estelle, who is moving about among her guests.) My countrymen?

Carabas. Yes, your countrymen.—What are you staring at?—Ah!—Hm! Do not burn your wings, young man.

Noël (confused.) Marchioness!

Carabas. Oh, yes, of course! Yes, your countrymen; these foolish Marseillese. Have you seen them?

Noël. Not yet; I am to meet their leaders to night.

Gregoire (to Estelle.) Madame, the comedians await your pleasure.

Estelle. Friends, if you will give yourselves the trouble of passing into the picture-gallery, you shall hear a little comedy.

Chorus. Charming! delicious! ravishing!

The players leave the tables, and all the guests hurry out through the inner salon. The musicians leave the gallery.

Estelle. Monsieur Dujardin, will you hand the Marchioness to her seat?

Exeunt Mad. de Carabas and Mons. Dujardin.

Noël (to Estelle.) I beseech you, give me a few moments alone!

Estelle. Nay, how can I leave my guests?

Noël. Stay behind; they will not notice your absence.

Estelle. Your face frightens me! Is it serious?

Noël. It is a matter of life and death—for me.

Ferrand. Marchioness, will you honour me with your hand?

Estelle. I pray you, excuse me. I will join you presently.

Ferrand. Come, then, Citizen Mistral.

Noël. I have news from Provenç, which I must communicate to the Marchioness at once.

Ferrand. From Provenç? How interesting! May one not share it?

Estelle. Will you not hand Madame Baudouin?

Ferrand (viciously.) Prodigiously delighted.

Baudouin. Vastly obliged!

Ferrand (to Baudouin.) What does this mean?

Baudouin. I wash my hands of it.

Exeunt Ferrand and Madame Baudouin. Manent Estelle and Noël.

Estelle. You see what you expose me to.

Noël. It is but this once! I have sought you so long! and this is the first time I have stood face to face with you, with no gadflies to buzz between us.

Estelle. They are my friends, sir; be pleased to curb your tongue.

Noël. Nay, I have but a few moments, and I will e'en let my tongue run loose. Will you be seated? Will you listen to me?

Estelle (sitting on couch, C.) Be brief, sir.

Noël. At last! at last! I can pour out my story. Come back with me to the beautiful past; come back with me to the sunny fields of Provence!

Estelle (half rising.) What does this mean?

Noël. Oh, be patient, be patient; let me have my say, and afterwards do with me as you will—(*Estelle sinks back*). Do you remember the grey old castle on the broken cliff? On one side the sea, shining in its mysterious azure; on the other the waving corn-fields, far as the eye could reach? You were the old lord's only child, and I the only child of his bailiff, and there were but few other children about us. The estate had been crippled—I know not how—and though your father was the proud descendant of a proud race, you were poor, ay, poorer than some of the peasants on the estate. Your father was but ill seen at court, for he was stern, and his wife—chaste; and so you lived, simple, austere lives in your gloomy castle; and you, the white-robed child, with hair made out of sunbeams, and eyes that reflected the sea's own blue, were suffered to run hand-in-hand with me, the rough son of the soil.

Estelle. Nay, you were never rough.

Noël. I was not rough, because you taught me gentleness. Do you remember our wild scrambles over the cliffs? and how I showed you where the petrels built their nests? and how you would not let me rob them of their eggs? Sometimes we found strange caverns, and made believe that you were a princess of romance, and I your knight; and on winter evenings,

when the storm was howling about the battlements, and the mad sea sent its spray almost against the windows of the castle, we sat in the ingle-nook, close, close together, while the old lord, your father, told us tales of his knightly youth, or your mother recited the miracles and martyrdoms of the saints.

Estelle. Why do you recall all this?

Noël. So we grew up; always together; sharing every thought, every emotion, till you were sent to a convent at Avignon, and I was left—alone with nature. Ah, how I longed for the day of your return! But ere it came, your mother spoke to me—oh, she was kindness itself!—she said that now you were a great lady, and were to marry a rich lord—and I must never speak to you again! I bit my lip till the blood came, so as to show no sign of suffering while I stood before her; but when I was in the open air I hurled myself on the grass, and dug my nails in the ground, and sobbed my heart out.

Estelle. Poor *Noël*!

Noël. This was my baptism of sorrow! I arose—a poet! Nay, let me not seem to boast of what I have done. If any songs of mine have sunk into the people's heart, if any of my words have roused their souls, it was because you inspired me.

Estelle. I!

Noël. Ah, you thought no more of me; I passed out of your life. But, unseen by you, I was watching over you, hungering for every sight of you which chance afforded me; and whenever I caught a glimpse of your form, my heart burst into song!

Estelle. Do not say you had passed out of my life. I knew of all you did; I, too, watched you. Our good people spoke of nothing but you; your songs were ever on their lips. How proud I was of you! How proud to know, that none understood you so well as I!

Noël. One day there was a great stir at the castle: you were going to Paris, to be—married. Let me not dwell on that day, nor on the days that followed. My life slowly ebbed from me. You in Paris, and I in Provence! well; I would follow you! What was the journey to

me? what if I starved on the road? With my lute slung across my back I journeyed, and the songs you had inspired brought me friends throughout the land.

Estelle. I heard of your progress; the fame of the Provençal minstrel was soon noised abroad.

Noël. I know. It pleased the King to summon me to court; I saw all the folk who call themselves great, the battered wreck your husband—

Estelle. He is dead—let him rest.

Noël. The fine ladies and the sneering beaux; on all their foreheads was the devil's brand! And amongst them, white, pure, stately, and spotless,—you!

Estelle. To what does this lead?

Noël. Patience; you must understand all. How I worked in Paris, how I suffered here—I, the child of the sun, cooped in the dingy streets—none will ever know; but your image, as I saw you that day in Versailles, seemed ever to beckon me onwards and upwards! Estelle, the height is reached! The old order has passed away! To-day I face you as your equal. To-day we, the workers, the poets, are the kings and lords; to-day, at last, I can speak, I can say:—Estelle, I love you!

Estelle (springing up.) Noël!

Noël. What else? what else, has all my life been but a hymn of love? Look into your own heart. Is not my image stamped there? Has all our young life together left no trace?

Estelle (looking into space.) I do not know what love is

Noël. That I can well believe. Who does, in your world? The thing they call love, and write their poems on, and put upon their stages, is a grim horror, loathly to the soul.—But I have come to teach you.

Estelle (in the same attitude, dreamily.) What is love?

Noël. Beyond Marseilles there lies a tongue of land that stretches far into the azure sea. In our soft speech 'tis called the Rocas Blanc. There stands a little house, bathed in the sun; fig-trees and oranges bury it from the sight; on all sides is the shimmering sea, lulling it, day and night, with murmuring love-songs. Come there with me, and day and night my life will have no other

task but to teach you what love is. We shall ne'er wax old; for they whose love grows greater with their age, have found the fountain of eternal youth!

Estelle. If I listen to him I shall go mad! Citizen Mistral, you forget that you are speaking to the daughter of the Lords of La Ciotat, to the Marchioness of Beau-lieu! By what right dare you, who call yourself a son of the soil, speak such words to me?

Noël. I am not speaking to the Marchioness, but to the woman! Let slip your useless titles before the people strip you of them!

Estelle. How, sir?

Noël. Do you think the Revolution is ended? No! it just beginning! I am of the people; I knew their tigerish heart. Believe me, before a year has passed, France will have been bathed in blood; and when she emerges from the flood, there will be scarce one castle standing to speak of feudal glory, nor one of your order left to claim it. Ah, fly from the coming horror, while it is yet time! Seek shelter in my arms; find safety under my name!

Estelle. Yet, foreseeing these horrors, you, who have the ear of the people, say no word to stay them?

Noël. Would I, if I could?—I know not. I have seen the sufferings of the poor.—Is it not just they should be avenged?

Estelle. And so you would even sacrifice me to your idea of justice.

Noël. You! No hair of your head shall be touched, while I live!

Estelle. Do you think I speak of my life?

Noël. What then?

Estelle. You would have me forget the traditions of a glorious line, forego the privileges of a lofty station, desert estates where hundreds depend on me, and spend a useless and selfish life in some obscure corner, that the vengeance of the mob may be fulfilled! I thank you, sir, but I see a different duty!

Noël. Estelle, you do not understand me. You shut your eyes to what is before you. Your estates! why, the Convention may confiscate them to night.

Your names and titles will be erased from history ; and, if your life is spared, you will be hounded from France, you will be forced to eke out your days, not in some obscure corner of your own country, which, if you chose, love would convert into a paradise, but amid the fogs of England, or the forests of Germany, alone, unloved, forgotten.

Estelle. And so you would bribe me with the thing you call love, to desert my post because it is dangerous ? Have you forgotten the words graven above the gate of La Ciotat ? "Fay ce que dois !" They ring now in my heart. Your path and mine lie far apart. "Do the right" in yours, but strive not to drag me down to it. That is an insult.

Noël. An insult !

Estelle. You are the people's idol ; be satisfied with that. Whatever your genius, whatever your fame, whatever your success, never forget again that I am *Estelle de Beaulieu*, and you—Citizen *Noël Mistral*.

Noël. I will not forget that when Citizen *Noël Mistral* laid an honest man's love at the feet of *Estelle de Beaulieu*, she spurned him like a dog.

Estelle (starting.) Nay—!

Noël. Oh ! I will not forget your lesson ! I will never again insult you with a word of love ! But—the seed is sown. Struggle as you may, wrap yourself in your pride as in a coat of mail, you will never lose the memory of this moment, you will never forget that I love you ! That is enough. Some day, perhaps, when you have cried in vain for help to all your friends, you will turn to me—

Estelle. And you would be right in spurning me.

Noël. Alas, no ! only a woman is cruel enough for that—

Estelle. Here come my guests !

Noël. Remember !—(*going.*)

Estelle. You must not go ! Be brave ! (*with deep meaning*) I have set you the example !—Mix with them ; let them not see.

Noël (wincing.) I understand.

Re-enter guests laughing and talking.

Dujardin. Very interesting, very interesting—

Carabas. You should have seen Her Majesty—
LeNormand. So vastly natural.

Abbé. I vow to Gad, Marchioness, I must send you
 my comedy.

Ferrand (*to Estelle*) What was the meaning of this
 interview?

Estelle. He told you. He brought me a message
 from Provence.

Ferrand. May I not know its purport?

Estelle. Marquis!

Ferrand. Do not torture me beyond endurance!

Estelle. You presume strangely.

Ferrand. Think how cruel you are; think how it
 must hurt me to see my affianced wife coquetting with
 a vagabond!

Estelle. The Citizen Mistral is not a vagabond, and
 I am not your affianced wife.

Ferrand. You are jesting.

Estelle. Alas! do I look as if I were?

Ferrand. Why would you make an enemy of me?

Estelle. Mine?

Ferrand. No, but Mistral's?

Estelle (*moving away.*) This is intolerable!

Ferrand. That went home.

*Meanwhile some of the guests have been pressing eagerly
 around Noël.*

Duhamel (*emerging from the group.*) Marchioness, we
 want your help.

Estelle. Command me.

Duhamel. These ladies have been praying the
 Citizen Mistral to give them a specimen of his impro-
 visation; but he is obdurate.

LeNormand. Oh, yes! we know how great he is,
 but his heart is flint.

Carabas. He even refuses me!

LeNormand. Will you intercede for us?

Estelle. Nay, I have no right to ask anything of
 the Citizen.

Ferrand. Let me try my powers of persuasion.
 (*to Noël.*) Come, citizen Mistral, these ladies will not
 be denied.

Noël. I cannot improvise to-night.

Ferrand. It is customary in polite society to yield with a good grace to a lady's wish. (*with a polite bow*) Of course you were not aware of this.

Noël. Now I understand why you dropped your title.

Ferrand. What do you mean ?

Noël (*with a bow.*) You felt that your manners were inadequate to support it.

Abbé. Gad ! Marquis ! That was a thrust.

Estelle. Citizen Mistral, why do you refuse ?

Noël. Is it your wish ?

Estelle. You would give us all great pleasure.

Abbé. Hem ! Perhaps the Citizen is not *prepared* for an improvisation.

Noël. It is, indeed, harder to make a broom, than to steal one.

Dujardin. Ecod, Abbé, is that what you call a "pretty conceit" ?

Noël. Well, give me a lute. But I must have a theme.

LeNormand. Oh, Lud ! Is there any other theme than love ?

Noël. What does our hostess say ?

Estelle. I say, The Love of Country.

Chorus. Oh, divine ! supreme ! rapturous !

The guests group themselves so as to leave the centre of the stage clear. Estelle is seated on the couch C. Noël takes a lute from a servant and stands alone. *After a moment's musing he strikes a few chords, and then begins in a sort of monotone, while the orchestra plays descriptive music.*

Noël. Brothers, have ye, from some high hill beheld
The fruitful champaign spreading at your feet,
Meadows and groves and silver-bosom'd streams,
Vineyards and cornfields, laughing in the sun ?
With eyes that flashed a holy pride, ye said :
" This is fair France ! who would not die for her ? "
Who dies for her indeed ? Have ye not seen,
Have ye not seen the labourer in the fields,
Bending his hollow chest against the spade,
Toiling in heat and frost, from morn till night,

From youth till age ? His love, his life, his soul,
 The soil absorbs them all ! With what return ?
 What profits all his ploughing, hoeing, delving ?
 When his end comes, what have his labours
 brought ?—

A little hole, wherein to lay his bones.
 Yet, let a whisper quiver through the air
 Of tyranny within, or foe without,
 Up starts the peasant ! straight his reaping-hooks
 Are beaten into swords ! See, with what haste
 He leaps on death, for her who slowly slew him !
 His is the Love of Country, strong as death.
 There is another love as strong as death :
 The love of man for woman. Woe to him,
 Who loves where he may hope for no return !
 Cruel the soil is to her lord's desire,
 And yields him stones for bread ; but woman's heart
 Is harder, where she loves not, than a stone !
 The scathing word that banishes all hope,
 The chilling glance that eats into his soul,
 These, let him lay his life before her feet,
 Are all the guerdon she bestows upon him !
 Woe, then ! a double woe !
 On him whose heart is shared 'twixt Country's Love,
 And love of such a woman !—

Oh, God ! what mockery !

He breaks off suddenly, throws the lute down at Estelle's feet, and dashes out of the room. Commotion among the guests. Estelle had been greatly moved by his words, and had half risen out of her seat. She sinks back ; the lute is under her hands ; she quickly unties its ribbon and conceals it in her bosom. Ferrand is watching her.

Duhamel. Hm ! The citizen seemed excited !

LeNormand. A poet's frenzy.

Carabas. A singular exhibition. I shall drop him.

Dujardin. Monstrous vulgar. What do you say, Abbé ?

Abbé. Wild stuff, wild stuff ; not even in rhyme.

Dujardin. Not a pretty conceit in it, eh ?

Abbé. Gad ! it was all conceit !—I wonder how much of it I can remember ?

Ferrand (watching Estelle.) So? so?—well, the test is easy. (*To Estelle.*) I have given you the evening, is your mind made up?

Estelle (rising; a new light in her face.) It is!

Ferrand. And you say?

Estelle (flashing at him). No!

Ferrand. Ah—perhaps your mind will change. (*To Madame Baudouin.*) Did you see her conceal the ribbon?

Baudouin. I did

Ferrand. You must stop this nonsense!

Baudouin (confused). Oh, it meant nothing. The ribbon is worn out, she intends to replace it.

Ferrand. I tell you, you must stop it. The ribbon is strong enough to drag a tumbril to La Roquette!

By this time the guests have settled down again to games, etc. The musicians strike up a Gavotte.

Abbé (to Estelle). Marchioness, will you honor me with your hand?

Duhamel. Hark!

A mob approaches, singing "Ca ira!" They stop under the windows and yell.

Ferrand. Out with the lights, as you value your lives!

Guests and servants hurriedly extinguish lights. Stage dark. Card-tables upset. Guests stand transfixed.

Estelle. Oh! what is it?

Ferrand. Your poet's country-men, marching to their quarters!

Mob cheers.

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

Scene:—A large room on the first floor of a Palais Royal Restaurant. Trivial decorations. The walls are covered with revolutionary placards, busts of Rousseau, Voltaire, etc. Door C. each side of door a row of pegs to hang coats, cloaks, etc., on. A long table C., other tables and chairs dotted about. The room is lighted by candles in sconces and candelabra.

Enter Jules, showing in Ferrand who has a long overcoat on.

Jules. It is cold for the time of year, citizen.

Ferrand. Very.—When do you say the club meets?

Jules. We expect the citizens at ten.

Ferrand (looking at his watch). A quarter of an hour. Time enough. Is the citizen Chauffin here?

Jules. The Captain is below.

Ferrand. Ask him to step up.

Jules. Very well, citizen.

Ferrand. Bring a bottle of Lafitte, and writing materials.

Jules. Very well, citizen. (exit C.)

Ferrand paces the room in great agitation; takes out his pocket-book and examines it, etc., etc.

Re-enter Jules with a sheet of foolscap, pen and ink, and wine, which he places on small table extreme L near footlights, and exit. He is followed by Chauffin.

Ferrand (to Chauffin). Ah, there you are! I have work for you.

Chauffin. Work, at this time o'night?

Ferrand. It's work which must be done at once, and it's work you will like. Sit down, and write your clerkiest hand.

Chauffin (seated at table). Is it to be like anyone else's this time?

Ferrand. No.

Chauffin. Suspects?

Ferrand. Yes.

Chauffin. Ha ! That's the work for me ! Thin out these bloody-minded aristos ! It doesn't go fast enough. The usual heading ?

Ferrand. Yes. Don't waste time.

Chauffin. All right, citizen. (*writing*) "List of Citizens dangerous to the Public Safety,"—on we go.

Ferrand (*dictating*). The citizen Beaurepaire—the citizen Carnot—the citizen Chépy—

Chauffin (*whistling*). Phew ! you are flying at high game, this time !

Ferrand. Don't waste time.

Chauffin. What, if one of these lists got into the wrong hands ?

Ferrand. Are you going to turn traitor ?

Chauffin. I!—you wound me. I ! the Incorruptible !

Ferrand. Very well, then.

Chauffin. But if it did. With these names on it, you would have plenty of god-fathers for the guillotine.

Ferrand. Bah ! then here is a god-mother ; the citizen Carabas, heretofore Marchioness of Carabas.

Chauffin (*writing*). Ca-ra-bas.

Ferrand. Add, particularly dangerous.

Chauffin. Ho !

Ferrand. The citizen Dujardin.—Have you got all those ? Let me see.—Very well ; now add, the citizen Estelle Beaulieu, known as Marchioness of Beaulieu.

Chauffin. Eh ?

Ferrand. Didn't you hear ?

Chauffin. What's in the wind, now ? I thought you were going to marry her.

Ferrand. Is she down ?

Chauffin. Down she is.

Ferrand. One more : the citizen Noel Mistral.

Chauffin. Mistral, the poet ?

Ferrand. The same.

Chauffin. Why, he's the hottest patriot going !

Ferrand. Write !

Chauffin. Well !—but I *should* like to know—

Ferrand. Is it written ? Give me the pen ; let me sign ; so. You would like to know what it means ?

You shall. Fill your glass first. Now, give me all your attention. Estelle de Beaulieu has refused my hand.

Chauffin. (whistling) Phew!

Ferrand. I'm in the most damnable predicament. Unless I can find a hundred and fifty thousand livres in a week, the treasury frauds will be discovered.

Chauffin. Phew!

Ferrand. Don't sit there whistling, man!

Chauffin. I don't see how the marriage would have prevented the discovery; you could'nt have married her in a week.

Ferrand. Animal! I could have got unlimited credit.

Chauffin. Ah. And she has refused you? Why?

Ferrand. Because she's in love with this same Noël Mistral.

Chauffin. Oho! Then the sooner we disappear the better.

Ferrand. That's not my way.

Chauffin. What is your way?

Ferrand. This. I have included her in this list of suspects. She will be arrested without knowing why or at whose instigation. Then I step on the scene; a word to the committee, and she is released; I have acted the part of a guardian angel; I have saved her: I marry her.

Chauffin. Are you sure you could save her so easily?

Ferrand. The committee does what I tell them to do. I tell them I am going to marry Estelle—that is enough.

Chauffin. Suppose she refuses?

Ferrand. How can she? I shall make it clear to her that the choice lies betwixt her head and my hand.

Chauffin. And—Mistral?

Ferrand. I leave him to the course of—

Chauffin. Justice?

Ferrand. Exactly.

Chauffin. It's a pretty idea, but risky.

Ferrand. How risky? He is cleared out of the way, and she owes me her life—there's no risk in it.

Chauffin. Monstrous risky. He has powerful friends, yes, as powerful as you. Is it necessary that he should be cleared out?

Ferrand. Absolutely. While he is about, I have no security. And he is the only stone in my path ; before he came in to-night, she had as good as accepted me.

Chauffin. Well, well, well ; but I should prefer a shorter way with him.

Ferrand. So should I ; but I cannot commit murder.

Chauffin. Of course, of course. Gad ! I have it.

Ferrand. What ?

Chauffin. Draw your chair nearer, citizen ; I don't want the whole world to hear this.

Ferrand. Bah ! the room is empty.

Chauffin. But it has walls.

Ferrand. Well ?

Chauffin. Do you know what has been going on at the prison of La Force during the last two hours ?

Ferrand. I have heard rumours, but I was at Estelle's—

Chauffin. The royalist crew are being summarily tried.

Ferrand. That's sudden.

Chauffin. The people would stand no further delay.

There was a talk of plots—

Ferrand. Well ?

Chauffin. The people got it into their heads that foul play was going on, that some of the prisoners were being released ; so they've constituted themselves judges—and—

Ferrand. And ?

Chauffin. Executioners.

Ferrand. Ha !

Chauffin. A wild mob surround the prison gate, and whoever is sent out, guilty or innocent, is cut down.

Ferrand. Killed ?

Chauffin. Killed.

Ferrand. Well ?

Chauffin. Closer. Now you write me a warrant for the immediate arrest of this Noël Mistral. I clap him in La Force to-night, and—justice—and the sovereign mob do the rest.

Ferrand. How would you get him in ?

Chauffin. There are many ways in ; there is only one way out ; and I am not a captain of the National Guards for nothing.

Ferrand. Supposing the trials ceased?

Chauffin. They are not to cease till every soul in the prison has been tried.

Ferrand. (rising) No. It won't do. (*He folds up the list and places it in the breast-pocket of his overcoat.*) By the time this list comes on for discussion I can work up a case against him, but I have no present excuse for writing a warrant. He is the people's pet; they would tear him out of your hands.

Chauffin. (biting his nails) You say he is in love with the Marchioness?

Ferrand. Yes; curse him!

Chauffin. He is coming here to-night, to meet the Marseillaise. I'll wager a hundred louis d'or I give you an excuse here, and to-night.

Ferrand. If you can do that—

Chauffin. Hush! Here come some of the boys. Don't be surprised at anything I do.

Enter a group of young people of both sexes. They come in noisily, and are followed by others until the room is swarming. They are dressed in every variety of costume. As they enter some of the men take off their coats, cloaks, etc., and hang them on the pegs near door, so that presently only one peg is vacant. Cora enters with the rest.

1st Republican. Jules! Jules! Wine! and plenty of it! We die of thirst!

2nd Republican. It is going to be a great night.

Ferrand. What is stirring, citizen?

1st Republican. Paris, citizen. And when Paris stirs you had better keep your head inside, if you don't want a slate on it.

Cora. Why, 'tis the citizen Ferrand.

Ferrand. Hebe herself!

Pedlar (emerging from the crowd). Any pretty toys for the little darlings? Now patriots! now is your only chance! Here are cockades and knots in the colours of the Republic, One and Indivisible. Here is the head of Capet on a pin—very choice. Here is a sweet model of the holy guillotine; to be worn as a brooch; a copy of the one made for young Capet to play with.

Cora (to Ferrand). Oh, citizen! give me that.

Pedlar. To be sure. What could look better on the bosom of a fair and virtuous patriot? The holy guillotine! that most wonderful of all inventions, which cuts off your head while you wait. Come, citizen, ten livres; a mere nothing.

Cora. How ravishing!

Pedlar. Ravishing is not the word. Allow me. You touch a little spring here, and down comes the blade.

Cora. Why, it works!

Pedlar. I should think it did! So the fair and virtuous patriot can amuse herself in the heavy hours of your absence, by cutting off the heads of sparrows.

Ferrand buys the trinket.

Pedlar. That's right. Sold again! Will one be enough? On we go—

Cora. Citizen, you are just an angel.

Boy (with papers, shouting). The Friend of the People!—latest number—ask for the Friend of the People!

Chauffin. Stop that noise!

Boy. The Friend of the People! Interesting details of the orgies held by Monsieur Veto and his wife in the Temple.

Chauffin. Stop that noise!

Boy. I am just as good a citizen as you!

Chauffin. You're not so big, and so take that. (*hits him over the head*).

Ferrand. Equality!

Chorus. Noël! Noël!

Enter Noël C. *He is feverishly excited.*

Chauffin (to Ferrand). Here he is. Now look out.

Noël (shaking hands right and left). Ha! this does me good! Here is mirth! here is wit! here is human nature! here are all the graces. What! Chauffin! my bold Captain! equipped for conquest, eh? And the genial citizen marquis—how does it run?—Marquis-citizen, citizen-marquis?—

Chorus. What news, Noël?

Noël (takes off his overcoat and flings it to Jules who hangs it on the vacant peg). Mind where you hang that coat!

There's a poem in the pocket that will make me immortal—after I'm dead. News? My news, is that women are as fair as ever—and as fickle.

Cora. Slander! slander!

Noël. Nay, not you! You are true as air!

Cora. As air?

Noël. Which embraces everything!

Ferrand. You are more at home here, citizen, than in a lady's drawing-room.

Noël. I suppose that's clever, but I don't understand it. All I know is that I'm thirsty. Plague on't! will nobody give me wine?

1st Republican (*handing him a glass*). Why, 'tis a new thing for you to drink with us.

Noël. I begin a new life to-night: wine, song, and woman!

Chorus. Bravo, Noël!

Noël. Ay, you're ready enough to applaud, when you see a man going to the devil!

Chauffin. Citizens!

Noël. Zounds! what's the matter with the captain?

Chauffin. I'm going to make a speech.

Noël. From the floor? Never! Come, my little warrior! on to the table with you! (*takes him by the waist and lifts him bodily on table C.*) So. Steady, now!

The crowd laugh. Voices "What is it, Noël?"

Noël. He says he's going to make a speech, but I don't believe him.

All throng round Chauffin. *Uproar.*

Chauffin (*pretending to be slightly intoxicated*). Brother Citizens!

Cora. And sisters, amiable Chauffin. Don't leave us out.

Chauffin. Brother and sister Citizens!—

Chorus. Bravo Chauffin! (*Uproar.*)

Chauffin. Silence, please.

Noël. Silence! Give little Cicero a chance!

Chauffin. Brother'n sister Citizens! I ask you: What are we here for?

1st Republican. To drink! merry Chauffin! To drink!

Chauffin. The citizen says, to drink; and the citizen is right. But to drink what? Water?

Chorus (with a yell). No!

Chauffin. Your u-namity is delightful. No. Not water, nor milk, nor even wine. What then? You have no answer? I, Chauffin, surnamed the Incorruptible will tell you. We are here to drink blood! Whose blood, do you ask? The blood of the aristocrats!

Chorus. Bravo! Bravo! (*Uproar.*)

1st Republican (*handing up a glass*). Have a drink, Incorruptible!

Chauffin. I drink death to the aristos. I denounce them all to you; I, Chauffin, the Incorruptible, the Voice of the Age, the Thunderer of the Coming Storm! What! they are merry in our misery! They dance while the enemy is at our gates! Ha! we will tell them they are dancing on their own coffins!

Chorus. Hurrah! (*All join hands and gallop grotesquely and wildly around him bellowing the following*):

Dance a round a round a round,
In our patriotic rage,
To the sound, the sound, the sound,
Of the Thundering Voice of the Age!

Noël (*leaving the group and seating himself wearily at table L.*) Pah! I'm sick of this.

Chauffin. I stand on the rock of Liberty—don't shake the table, citizen!—and I denounce them all. Shall I tell you what I saw, as I came here? Eh? Shall I?

Chorus (*again joining hands and dancing round him with renewed frenzy, but in the opposite direction, and imitating a donkey's bray.*)

He'll tell us what he saw:
He-haw! He-haw!
He'll tell us what he saw:
He-haw! He-haw! He-haw!

Chauffin. I saw lights. Lights, citizens! Wax candles; a blaze! What did I, as a good citizen, do? I stood and howled; and the lights vanished. Where do you think this was? In the hotel of the woman Estelle de Beaulieu!

Uproar. Noël springs up. Ferrand watching him.

Chauffin. What! Is she to flaunt her vice in our eyes to the light of wax candles? Out with the lights, say I! Away with her paramours!—

Noël has pushed his way through the circle; he now lifts up the hinder end of the table, whereby Chauffin is brought to the floor in a sitting posture, surrounded by all the bottles and glasses. Frightful uproar, partly good humoured, partly threatening.

Noël. Citizens! We war against aristocrats, not against the character of defenceless women! Nor do we use quite such dirty weapons as (giving Chauffin a friendly kick) this;

Chorus. Bravo, Noël!

Noël (lifting Chauffin up by the collar). No offence, citizen; I interrupted you for your own good. You were saying words you would have been sorry for later.

Chauffin. Interrupted! Nearly killed me.

Noël. Don't talk nonsense! Come, you wanted to drink blood just now. Try this. It's the same colour, but you'll find it nicer.

Chauffin. Well; I bear you no grudge. Success to our plans.

Noël. Nay, success to yours, if you will. I have none (turns away).

Chauffin (to Ferrand.) Do you want more excuse than this?

Ferrand (writing in his pocket-book). It was cleverly done.

Chauffin. The citizen is lukewarm. He insults a patriot, and knocks him off the table in the midst of an eloquent speech. Eh?

Ferrand (tearing a leaf out of the book and handing it to Chauffin). Here is the warrant; but don't carry it into effect here.

Chauffin. Do you think I'm a fool? I must have my men about me. What about my hundred louis?

Ferrand. I haven't them upon me.

Chauffin. You are not going to haggle?

Ferrand. The moment you have secured him, come and fetch them.

Chauffin. And if you are from home?

Ferrand. I will leave word where I may be found.

Chauffin. Right. Mind—no haggling! (Exit *Chauffin*)

Cora (to *Ferrand*). You did not dance with us, little citizen.

Ferrand. Faith, no! I am too old.

Cora. I think you are too proud. I warrant you dance with aristocrats.

Ferrand. Hush, pretty rogue! Nay, 'tis too hot to dance.

Cora. Yes, in that coat! Come! for my sake; or I shall tell them you are too proud to dance with us.

Ferrand. There is no gainsaying those eyes. Here, Jules, take my coat.

Jules takes Ferrand's coat, and finding no peg vacant, hangs it over Noël's.

Chorus. The Marseillaise! The Marseillaise! Bravo! Bravo!

Noël. Where? Where?

All hurry to the door. Enter some of the Marseillaise leaders, including Castellan, Costalde, and Benizet; they are rough, unkempt, and travel-stained, and form a picturesque contrast to their surroundings. The crowd presses about them with enthusiastic welcome.

Noël. Welcome, brothers! What! Costalde! as round as ever? The road has not pulled you down, eh? Heh! Castellan! What, boy! don't you remember me? Many's the bouillabaisse we've enjoyed together! Father Benizet! still wiry? (to waiter) Jules! Jules! wine! champagne! bring it in casks! What! We'll have a merry night! (change) A merry night.

Ferrand. You are elevated, Citizen!

Noël. To the seventh heaven! who would not be, to see all his old friends about him again? (to the *Marseillaise*). Your hands all! I don't know all your names, but your faces all have the print of my own sun upon them! Brothers, your hands!

Chorus. Noël! Noel!

Noël. Come! Glasses! Stir yourself, Jules!

Waiters bring champagne.

Castellan. Faith! these are the aristocracy of wine!

Noël (suiting the action to the word). Then treat them as such, and knock their heads off! Never wait for the corks!

Castellan. Brother, your welcome does our hearts good. You have not forgotten us, for all your fame.

Benizet. How should he forget? Have I not danced him on these arms?

Costalde. Ah, and we've not forgotten him, either. Do we not sing his songs on the Rocas Blanc?

Castellan. Do you remember the Rocas Blanc, Noël?

Benizet. Heh! And the little house you used to say you'd buy some fine day when you were rich?

Costalde. It's waiting for you still.

Noël (in agony). They will drive me mad!—Citizens, a toast! Our brothers from the South!

Chorus. Bravo! Bravo! (*The toast is drunk with enthusiasm.*)

Castellan. This Noël!—Citizens, we thank you for your welcome, we thank you for your love of our brother Noël. (*To Marseilles*) Comrades, I give you Paris! I give you our Noël! Success to him: in life, and in love!

Ferrand (drinking). In life, and in love!

Noël. How can I fail of success with so many graces about me? Come! fill, fill! why you have left your thirst at home! Who can fail with a skin full of wine?

Costalde. Ha! It brings life!

Noël. It brings oblivion.

Cora (offering champagne). Citizen Mistral?

Noël. Ay, my little charmer! pour me a bumper!

Cora (pouting). You would scarce speak to me yesterday!

Noël. But to-day I speak to you! Come! drink with me! Nay, do but see the foam! light as—woman's love!

Castellan (to Costalde and Benizet). This is not our serious Noel.

Costalde. He has some fever in his blood.

Benizet. Ah! this Paris!

Noël. 'Od rot it! what sober faces have we here! Come, Castellan, tell us of your march!

Chorus. Ay! ay! tell! tell!

Castellan (clumsily). Our march? what shall I tell?
 I am no man of words, but a plain citizen.—Well—our
 Mayor spoke to us: “The country is in danger” says
 he; “beyond the Rhine, kings are banding together to
 destroy our liberties. Our brothers in Paris are at work;
 shall Marseilles do nothing?” So we arose—five
 hundred of us—nay, five hundred and seventeen, to be
 exact. We left our shops to our wives, took muskets
 and what other arms there were—three guns—none of
 us knew the road—ha! France is big!—we just marched
 from town to town, and—well, and here we are. We’ve
 brought our arms and our lives: do what you will with
 them.

Great cheering. Noël has been sunk in thought.

Ferrand. It was a long march.

Costalde. And a gloomy one.

Ferrand. Gloomy?

Costalde. Ah, we had nothing to sing on the road.—
 All our songs were royalist!

Noël. And I was not with you!

Castellan. If you had been, you should have sung us
 a hymn to march to!

Costalde. He shall do it now! Noël, a song
 for us!

Chorus. A song! a song!

Noël. A song, with my heart breaking!

Costalde. What do you mean?

Noël (passing his hand over his eyes). Give me a
 pen!—But fill first!—I must have fire in my veins!

Ferrand. Here’s to Inspiration!

Noël (dashing off a tumbler of champagne). So! Now,
 paper.

Ferrand. Jules, paper!

Noël. Nay, never wait for Jules! There’s a sheet
 in my coat pocket—what the devil is the matter with the
 floor? (*He half staggers to the coats, mistakes Ferrand’s
 for his own, plunges his hand in the pockets and produces
 Ferrand’s list. The Marseillaise have surrounded Ferrand.*)

Castellan. Citizen Ferrand, we Southerners have
 heard of the People’s Friend.

Ferrand. You flatter me.

Castellan. Heh ? Costalde, Benizet. Have we not talked of him, down there ?

Costalde. Your hand, citizen !

Benizet. To my heart, brother ! (*embraces him*).

Ferrand. Enthusiastic, but unsavoury.

Noël. So ! here's a sheet that would hold an epic ! Give me room ! There's a rhyme in my head.

Chorus. Noël ! Noël !

Noël spreads the paper on table *L*, in such a manner that the list of suspects is underneath ; sits on one corner of the table, and so writes.

Noël. Leave shouting a moment ! (*muttering while he writes* :)

Children of the Fatherland

Wherefore do ye idly stand—

Why ! It falls to music !

Chorus. Sing it ! Sing it !

Noël. Give me time !

Castellan (*to Ferrand*). A great man, our Noël !

Ferrand. You know him of old ?

Castellan. I remember him, hatless and shoeless, running about our rocks with the little Estelle.

Ferrand. Estelle ?—

Castellan. De la Ciotat ; she that is now Marchioness of Beaulieu.

Ferrand. To be sure. What ? they were child-lovers ?

Castellan. As you might say brother and sister. Ah, a pretty pair.

Noël (*jumping off the table*). Now ! Attention !

Costalde. Is it done ?

Noël. The first verse ; and it runs to a kind of tune. Listen.

Chorus. Silence ! silence ! Noël's song !

Noël. If it is good for anything, you will shout the chorus.

Chorus. Noël ! Noël !

The crowd group themselves picturesquely R. and back. Noël remains L corner front, and sings towards crowd, thus half turning his back to the footlights. (Should the actor really be able to sing, a different arrangement will suggest itself). During

the course of the song the crowd must display every symptom of interest and enthusiasm.

Noël (sings).

Children of the Fatherland,
Wherefore do ye idly stand
Waiting in the market-place ?
Wot ye not on every hand
Foemen leagued, a mighty band ?
Stand, and meet them face to face !
Brothers rise, the hour is flying,
Freedom dies, and calls you dying,
Brothers rise, and quit your trance !
Hark ! the knell of Freedom, tolling,
Sends its thunder, rolling, rolling,
Far across the fields of France !

Now ! with all your lungs !

Chorus. Brothers rise, etc.

When the chorus is finished there is the wildest enthusiasm, embraces and shouts.

Costalde (embracing Noël). To my arms, brother ! we are proud of you !

Chorus. More ! More !

Noël. Wait ; I will give you another verse.

Ferrand. Curse the fellow !

Cora (bringing wine). Drink, citizen ; I have kissed the glass.

Noël. Nay, I thank you ; now I have inspiration enough.

Ferrand is in conversation with a group on the other side of the stage. Noël places himself on table L, as before.

Noël (muttering).

Nay, but freedom shall not die,
With her children standing by,
Doing naught in her defence.
Led with songs that rend the sky,
Brother answering brother's cry—

Rot it ! here's no more space !—Faith ! we turn over.
(Does so, and becomes aware of the writing). Bah ! tis written on !—Hm ! not my hand. (Starting) God ! what's here ?
(He peruses the list in terrible agitation).

Costalde. What's the matter with him ?

Benizet. Let be. He is in the throes.

Castellan. Ah! it's the same with me when I come to a word I can't spell.

Noël (*jumping off the table in great excitement*). 'Slife what a traitor!

Chorus. The second verse!

Noël (*confused*). Nay—nay—it has not come yet! The rhymes are difficult.—How to save her?

Chorus. Come! the second verse.

Noël. Ay, ay! Here it is. (*writes hurriedly*). So!—listen again.

Group as before.

Noël (*sings*.)

Nay, but Freedom shall not die,

With her children standing by,

Doing naught in her defence.

Led with songs that rend the sky,

Brother answering brother's cry,

We will drive the tyrant hence.

So we conquer or we perish,

For the Fatherland we cherish,

Marching with resistless tramp;

Not a prisoner left to languish,

Nor a pauper in his anguish,

(*glancing at Ferrand*) Nor a traitor in our camp!

Now! Hands joined! Together!

Chorus. So we conquer, etc.

At its conclusion renewed enthusiasm. Cries of "long live Noël!" etc.

Castellan. Give me the poem, Noël; I'll to the printer's with it.

Noël. Nay, 'tis not finished. You shall have it to-morrow. I must add a verse and polish the whole. Nay, nay—to-morrow. (*He turns away, and sits in deep thought at table L.*)

Costalde (*whispering among the crowd*). Citizens, shall we not reward our poet? What say you?—a wreath?

Confused murmurs, ending in a shout of "Noël!" and the crowd go off, laughing and singing. Ferrand makes for his coat.

Noël (*awaking out of his reverie*). Ay! that may do! Gad! where have the boys gone?

Ferrand. To get a wreath for their Laureate.

Noël. But you are not going too, citizen?

Ferrand. With your permission.

Noël. Nay! never leave a bottle while there is a drop in it? Come! join me!

Ferrand. Faith no! I'll to bed, while my legs will serve me.

Noël. 'Slife, but you *shall* join me! What! do you refuse to drink with me? Sit! sit! (*Forces Ferrand into the chair next to the wall, L of table L.*)

Ferrand. One glass, then.

Noël. Ay! and a friendly chat. What do you think of my song?

Ferrand. Oh, 'tis very well; 'twill please the common.

Noël (*holding the sheet with the list towards Ferrand*). Will you read it?

Ferrand. I have no taste for such trivialities.

Noël. Nay, do but glance at it.

Ferrand. You are importunate. I say, I have no taste for it.

Noël (*sternly*). And I say: read!

Ferrand. You are drunk, citizen! (*recognising the list*). 'Sblood! give me that paper!

Noël (*folding it up, and putting it in his breast-pocket*). Nay, you have no taste for such trivialities.

Ferrand (*about to spring on him*). Give me that paper, or!—

Noël (*covering him with a pistol which he produces from the same pocket*). What? If I am drunk, my hand is unsteady. You had better sit down

Ferrand (*sinking back*). Curse you!

Noël. By all means. How I came by this paper I know not—

Ferrand. You stole it out of my coat!

Noël. Did I? Gad! then I have more wit when I'm drunk, than when I am sober.

Ferrand. What are you going to do with it?

Noël. That depends. How many copies of this pleasing document are there?

Ferrand. None.

Noël. So you say. But you could make another at once. Citizen marquis, I am a simple creature, and quite unequal to cope with a man of your genius. You have betrayed your old order (Ferrand *rises*)—oh, do not rise!—(sternly) I say, sit!—and now you would betray your present friends. What have I done, that you should want my life? I know not. But here stands my name as that of a candidate for the polite attentions of the headsman.

Ferrand. You can do nothing with it.

Noël. Pardon me; I might show it to citizen Carnot or to citizen Beaurepaire, both of whom figure on it, both of whom are members of the Constituent Assembly.

Ferrand. What then?

Noël. The headsman would enjoy the inestimable advantage of making your acquaintance instead of mine.

Ferrand. Well; what is your price?

Noël. You see, I am somewhat awkwardly placed. If I show this paper to persons in authority, though I shall personally escape, suspicion may still attach to some of these names. If I destroy it, you can write another. The only really satisfactory way of dealing with the question would be to shoot you first, and then destroy the paper. That, however, is too violent a

LIST OF SUSPECTS	FIRST PERMIT.
	SECOND PERMIT.

method. So I have decided to run away and leave these people to get out of it as best they can.

Ferrand. What do you mean ?

Noël tears off the part of the foolscap sheet still unwritten on and writes.

Noël. Kindly sign this.

Ferrand (reading). "The Citizen Noël Mistral has herewith permission to pass unhindered out of Paris, and out of France—with his wife"—with his *wife*!—Are you married ?

Noël. Will you sign ?

Ferrand. Are you married ?

Noël. Is it not written ? Will you sign ?

Ferrand (signs). There ; now give me the list.

Noël. Not so fast. The list I keep, till I am beyond the frontier. But your courtesy deserves its return, and I promise not to show it to any living soul connected with the government. As soon as I am safe, I tear it up.

Ferrand. Can I trust you ?

Noël. That is for you to determine. Come, give me the pass.

Ferrand (about to hand it over). There, then. (suddenly). Stay ! (He is struck with a brilliant idea). That paper is worthless.

Noël. Why ?

Ferrand. Because the entire document must be in my hand. (tears the leaf in two and writes). See, I am in a good humour ; I will write you another.—You insist on the—wife ?

Noël. If you please.

Ferrand. Ah ! You poets are gay dogs.

Noël. Oh, monstrous.

Ferrand. There is your document, then.

Noël. What are you going to do with my original ?

Ferrand (folding it up and pocketing it). This ? oh, keep it as an autograph of the people's poet.

The crowd are heard outside, singing the refrain of Noël's song. They burst in triumphantly ; Castellan at their head with a wreath.

Chorus. Noël ! Noël !

Castellan. Brother, I crown you the people's poet !

Noël. Nay—nay!

Castellan. Now, citizens! to the sky with him!

Chorus. Noël! Noël! (They surround him.)

Ferrand (looking at his watch). Half-past ten. The treasury first; then Estelle; and then—safety!

The crowd have placed Noël on a chair and raised him on their shoulders.

Ferrand (with an elaborate bow). I do homage to the people's poet. Citizen, you have found your level!

The crowd strike up the refrain of Noël's song.

CURTAIN:



ACT III.

Scene : Estelle's boudoir, luxuriously furnished. Doors C and R, window L. Estelle seated in front of dressing table; Suzette dressing her hair, and Madame Baudouin reading to her.

Baudouin (very monotonously, and without minding any stops.) "But my Deceits have not wanted Punishment though they might justly have been exempted because they wanted no Excuse nor is my Disobedience without some Pretence since that I might not fail in performing the Command you enjoyned me never to see you again in your own Kingdom"—

Estelle. My good soul, have mercy ! I don't understand a word you are reading.

Baudouin. To be honest, neither do I ; but 'tis vastly fine language.

Estelle. Nay, shut the silly book, and let us talk.

Baudouin. I thought it would compose your nerves. You need rest ; I will withdraw.

Estelle. Nay, nay ; prithee sit still.

Baudouin. Yet you must be very tired. It has been a great evening for you.

Estelle. An evening I shall remember all my life.

Baudouin. I still regret the company was so mixed. Sure I am the Marquis did not like meeting some of your guests.

Estelle. And I am sure some of my guests did not like meeting the Marquis.

Baudouin. His wit is, to be sure, monstrous severe.

Estelle. Now your conversation is as dull as your book.

Baudouin. I am sorry I weary you.

Estelle (to Suzette). Child, would you pull my hair out ?

Suzette. Madame is so restless.

Estelle. There, I am cross, and you are tired.
Leave it, and get you to bed.

Suzette. But, Madame!

Estelle. Tie it up in a knot, child, and leave us.
Suzette does so and exit.

Estelle. Now she is gone, come nearer.

Baudouin. It is nearly midnight; think of your complexion.

Estelle. My complexion is of no further use to me.

Baudouin. What do you mean?

Estelle. Do you know what has happened to me to-night?

Baudouin. Something that has strangely disturbed you.

Estelle. I have had two declarations of love.

Baudouin. Two! From whom?

Estelle. Guess.

Baudouin. Nay, do not torture me; the marquis, of course?

Estelle. The ex-marquis, of course.

Baudouin. And the other?

Estelle. Guess again. (*She pulls out the lute ribbon.*)

Baudouin. Monsieur Dujardin?—nay, he is too old. Monsieur Duhamel?—nay, he is too fat. (*Seeing the ribbon.*) Not Noël Mistral!

Estelle. Why, thou clever rogue! Noël himself.

Baudouin. I told you what would happen! I do trust you showed him his place.

Estelle. No; he showed me mine.

Baudouin. You alarm me. For heaven's sake do not say—

Estelle. Be at ease; I refused them both.

Baudouin. I vow, you are out of your wits! You cannot refuse the marquis.

Estelle. So he said; yet I found it, oh, so easy!

Baudouin. The other, of course, is out of the question. You could not possibly do anything but refuse him.

Estelle. Yet I found it, oh so difficult! (*kisses the ribbon.*)

Baudouin. Child, you distract me! Fie! throw away that ribbon.

Estelle. No, my good Baudouin. See, I tie it round
my arm in a love-knot. Touch it at your peril!—You
dear soul; don't I tell you I refused him!

Enter Suzette C.

Suzette. Monsieur Gregoire, to speak to you,
Madame.

Estelle. What is the matter?

Suzette. He will not tell me; he seems greatly
alarmed.

Estelle. Let him come in.

Exit Suzette C.

Baudouin. Do give me that ribbon. I would not
have the servants see it.

Estelle. What! does Gregoire also pretend to my
hand?

Enter Gregoire C.

Estelle. Well, old friend, what is the matter?

Gregoire. Marchioness, I come to warn you. I
escorted Madame Le Normand's chair to her house.
The streets are dangerous. There is horrible work
toward. The royalist prisoners are being massacred
without mercy. From all the faubourgs crowds are
marching on the prisons. Paris expects a terrible night.

Estelle. Sad news, indeed; but how does it affect us?

Gregoire. The excitement may spread from the
prisons; the mob do not distinguish readily; Madame's
name—

Estelle. I understand. You think there is danger?

Gregoire. I tremble for Madame.

Estelle. At any rate we are warned. Give orders
that the entire household are to stay up. Those who
are afraid had better leave the house.

Gregoire. Oh, Madame!

Estelle. Nay, that was not meant for you; you
must guard the door.

Gregoire. Till I perish! (*Exit C.*)

Baudouin. I would there were a man in the house.

Estelle. Are there not servants enough?

Baudouin. I mean a gentleman.

Estelle. But as there is none we must e'en put on
manly hearts. What now?

Suzette (at door C.) The citizen Ferrand to see you, in haste.

Estelle. At this hour? He cannot be admitted.

Baudouin. You *must* see him.

Suzette. He will take no denial.

Estelle. He only comes to repeat Gregoire's warning. I will not see him.

Baudouin. Let me speak with him. For heaven's sake do not offend him.

Estelle. Very well. I will retire. Let him come up. (*Exit Suzette.*)

Baudouin. I wish you would see him yourself.

Estelle. I will only see him if there is absolute necessity.

Baudouin. He might be so useful if there is danger.

Estelle. Do wait till the danger is here. (*Exit R.*)

Suzette (at door C.) The citizen Ferrand. (*Exit Suzette.* *Enter Ferrand; he carries a portfolio under his arm.*)

Ferrand (surprised). Madame Baudouin!—Where is Estelle?

Baudouin. She begs you will excuse her. She is so tired.

Ferrand. The time for child's-play is over.

Baudouin. What is the matter?

Ferrand. She must fly for her life.

Baudouin. Why, what has she done?

Ferrand. She has enemies; nay, it would take too long to tell. Tell her she *must* see me; tell her I have come to save her.

Baudouin. To save her?

Ferrand. Yes; she must fly with me.

Baudouin. Are you threatened as well?

Ferrand. My life is not worth a week's purchase. You have helped me before; you must help me again.

Baudouin. What has happened?

Ferrand. A list of suspects, signed by me, has fallen into my enemy's hands—'tis true he has promised to do nothing with it, but what is that promise worth?—I must fly.

Baudouin. How can I help you? I have no money.

Ferrand. It is not money I want. I passed the treasury on my way here. (*Indicating folio*) Here are two million livres.

Baudouin. Stolen?

Ferrand. Fie! No; a reward for my services, to which I have helped myself.

Baudouin. What do you want of me, then?

Ferrand. Persuade her to see me; that is all.

Baudouin. Why should you hamper yourself with her?

Ferrand (*breaking out*). Because I love her! For mercy's sake waste no more time, but force her to come here.

Baudouin. Is it worth my while?

Ferrand. It shall be, well worth your while.

Exit Baudouin R. *Ferrand* walks up and down in great agitation—opens folio, and examines its contents, places it, open, on dressing table. Opens window and looks out; shuts it with an impatient shrug. *Enter Estelle R.*

Estelle. You insist on seeing me, Marquis?

Ferrand. Thank heaven! at last!

Estelle. Your visit is strangely timed.

Ferrand. When I was here earlier you told me to speak naturally. Let me tell you in as few words as possible that you are in terrible danger. I have seen your name on a list of suspects, signed by a prominent member of the Committee of Safety.

Estelle. What does that mean?

Ferrand. It means that you will be arrested; that mysterious accusers will rise up against you, as it were out of the earth; that you will have a mock trial, during which you will suffer every indignity to which womanhood can be exposed; that you will be condemned as a matter of course, and that you will be—executed.

Estelle. What have I done?

Ferrand. It is not what you have done, but what you are.

Estelle. But who can bear me such ill will?

Ferrand. How do I know? We live in times when it behoves us to weigh well whom we admit to our friendship. You have trustingly admitted all: from cringing Duhamel to vagabond Mistral.

Estelle (*impatiently*). Well, well; what do you advise me to do?

Ferrand. There is only one thing you can do. You must fly from Paris to-night—now—instantly.

Estelle. That is impossible.

Ferrand. Thanks to me it is easy. *Estelle*, I love you, I adore you—ah! I am speaking naturally now!—Nay, I know my love is not returned, yet; I dare not ask so much; but give me the right to protect you, and by and by you will learn to love me.

Estelle. Enough, enough!

Ferrand. See: I have made everything smooth for you. The moment I learnt the danger you ran, I procured a pass, under which we can both leave France unmolested.

Estelle. Both? How?

Ferrand. As man and wife. For your sake I sacrifice my future here: all my ambition, all my dreams of greatness; and I only ask you in return, to be my wife indeed, when we are safe in some distant land. Ah! my burning passion shall force a little love out of you yet! Say you will come!

Estelle. Marquis, your words touch me very very deeply, but I cannot accept this generous sacrifice.

Ferrand. Nay, but you *must*. I tell you your life is in immediate danger.

Estelle. My life is in God's hands.

Ferrand. Don't comfort yourself with any such superstition. You little know—hark!

A mob passes under window with torches. They stop and yell. Cries of "Down with the woman Beaulieu! Death to the aristocrats!"

Estelle. Heavens! The crowd again! What are they?

Ferrand. Your judges.

The yells continue; growing fiercer. A flaring torch is hurled through the window. Ferrand stamps it out. Estelle sinks on a couch with a cry, and buries her face in her hands.

Ferrand. They are in earnest this time.

Estelle. Save me!

Ferrand. I will try.

He opens the window, and stands in the torchlight.

Voices. Eh ! look at the man !—Down with the aristocrat !—Shoot him !—Take that ! (*a stone crashes in*). To the lantern !—He wants to speak !—Nay, mates, I know him, 'tis citizen Ferrand !—Ferrand !—Long live Ferrand !

Ferrand. Citizen Patriots !

Voices. Silence !—He's going to speak !—Speak up !

Ferrand. Citizen Patriots ! You all know me : citizen Ferrand. You know what I have done for the Republic ! I have repudiated my hateful title, and poured my estates into her coffers.

Voices. The People's Friend ! Hear him !

Ferrand. You are under an error, respectable citizens. The citizen Estelle Beaulieu is one of us. She is as good a Republican as any of you. She also repudiates her title !—

Estelle. It is false ! (*She springs up and seizes his arm*).

Ferrand (*to Estelle*). Silence ! (*He puts his arm round her waist and draws her close to him*). Here she is, to speak for herself.

Mob cheers.

Ferrand (*to Estelle*). Do not move ! (*to mob*). I, citizen Ferrand, vouch for her. She is going to be my wife.

Voices. Hurrah for both of them !

Ferrand. Nay, hurrah for the Republic !—And so good night to you all !—Stay ! (*throwing out money*) Drink luck to us.

Mob cheers and passes on, crying "To the Prisons !"

Estelle (*breaking from him*). Oh the shame of it !

Ferrand. Now you can see how real your danger is ; you can realize what treatment you will receive if you refuse my offer.

Estelle. And yet I refuse ! The daughter of the house of La Ciotat will not make such terms with death !

Ferrand. It is not only your pride that stands in the way. Estelle, you have another reason.

Estelle. I tell you I cannot love you. That is reason enough.

Ferrand. Yesterday—nay, to-night, you gave me hope.

Estelle. I did not know my mind ; I know it now.

Ferrand. Shall I tell you how you know it?

Estelle. Marquis!

Ferrand (taking hold of the ribbon, which comes undone in his hand). By this token!

Estelle. How dare you, sir! (snatches the ribbon from him and places it hurriedly in her bosom).

Ferrand. Yes! you love this vagabond—this wandering minstrel—this son of a serf.

Estelle. If you will have it, Yes! I love him! Yes! I have always loved him! the vagabond, the minstrel, the son of serfs! You, You hurl these titles at him as insults! Seigneur Marquis Ferrand of Chateaubel, *Friend of the People!* How much more glorious are they than yours, which you have flung as a sop to the mob!

Ferrand. Estelle, Estelle, for the love of heaven listen to reason! Listen, while it is yet time, to the voice of love!

Estelle. The voice of love! His voice! It is in my ears now, calling me, drawing me to him!—Noël, I will follow you to the end of the world!

Ferrand. Oh that I should live to hear Estelle de la Ciotat glory in dishonour!

Estelle. Dishonour!

Ferrand. This man, this Noël Mistral—nay, I cannot say it!

Estelle. Oh, never hesitate! Out with the new slander!

Ferrand. Estelle, be brave! indeed, indeed, I pity you. This man is—married.

Estelle (with a lofty smile). Pitiful liar!

Ferrand. Alas! it is the truth. Nay, do you know his hand?

Estelle signifies "Yes" by a sign. Already a horrible fear is upon her; she stands statue-like.

Ferrand. Then read this. This is a pass which he wrote not an hour ago, under my own eyes, and asked me to sign—read, read.

He hands her the paper. At first she is too dazed to read it. She makes an effort and reads the pass. When she comes to the words "And his wife" she shivers; her face grows hard and she stands rigid.

Ferrand (after a pause). Well?

Estelle (in an altered voice). Is this a trick?

Ferrand. I swear by everything you hold sacred, it is no trick.

Estelle (in the same tone). He wrote this?

Ferrand. Do you not know the hand?

Estelle. It is his. (*She tries to look at the paper again, but shudders at the sight of it and lets it fall.*)

Ferrand. I tell you the man is a low-born scoundrel. These dreamers are all alike. You were a new romance, you amused him!

Estelle (with a quiver of shame). Oh!—

Ferrand. I will tell you more. The list of suspects in which your name stands was in his possession!

Estelle (still quietly). That is well. If he had put this shame upon me, he could have done no less than slay me.

Ferrand. But I have saved you from this shame, and I will save your life. Open your eyes, Estelle! with me is truth; with me is love; with me is happiness!

Estelle (still motionless). Happiness!—Yes, I will come with you.

Ferrand. At last!—Now I will tell you more. Your estates have been confiscated, but I have induced the Executive to grant you an indemnity. (*indicating folio*). There lies my marriage gift: two million livres!

Estelle (still in an unnatural voice, but with fearful intensity). Yes! I will come with you—upon one condition!

Ferrand. Name it!

Estelle. That you will have this man arrested—that you will compass his death—(*breaking down*) Oh! I cannot bear it! (*she sinks on the couch and buries her face in the cushions*).

Ferrand. Zounds! my order to Chauffin, which I had forgotten! If he is arrested now with that infernal list upon him, there will be a hue-and-cry after me; the gates will be watched, and I shall be caught like a rat in a trap! I must see Chauffin at all hazards! Estelle! listen! I will avenge you. I will order his arrest now, while I still have power. Look up, my love, your

vengeance shall be complete. I hasten to a creature of mine, a captain of the National Guards, whose quarters are close at hand—meanwhile, prepare for the journey—the carriage I have hired should have been here before now—I will be with you in a quarter of an hour.—Be ready! (*Exit C.*)

A pause. Estelle remains motionless. Enter Madame Baudouin.

Baudouin. Dear child! what is it? The Marquis rushed past me, and told me to hasten to you. What has happened?

Estelle. Have I been asleep? Say I have been asleep! For mercy's sake tell me it was all a dream!

Baudouin. I do not understand.

Estelle. No! it was no dream! Happiness is a dream; misery is always real.

Baudouin. The Marquis told me to help you make ready for a journey. Are you, then, going with him?

Estelle. With him—with anybody!—would it were with death!

Baudouin. What has happened?

Estelle. Oh, do not ask! only this; that with one word love is turned to shame, pride is humbled, trust is shattered, all things holy are made vile—and my heart is broken.

Suzette (*at door C.*) The citizen Mistral is below, urgently asking to see Madame.

Estelle (*thunderstruck*). He dares! Tell Gregoire to bar the door in his face!

Baudouin. I am glad you have found a proper spirit at last. Don't you hear, child? Tell Gregoire to bar the door in his face,

Estelle. Stop! To have him here! Here! To tell him how I hate him!—That were sweet! Admit him!

Exit Suzette.

Baudouin. You will need my support.

Estelle. No, my good friend; I have that to say to the citizen which no other may hear. Go and get such things ready as I shall need for the journey. Nay, prithee go.

Baudouin. May I remain for ever a widow if I understand what is going on ! (Exit R.)

Suzette (at door C.) The citizen Mistral. (Exit.)

Estelle stands near the dressing table, with her back to Noël. He advances one step from the door, and remains standing, haughty and cold. A pause.

Noël. Marchioness.—(Estelle quivers at the sound of his voice). I know how hateful my presence must be to you; and only the most urgent necessity would have brought me here again so soon. I have come to tell you that you stand in deadly peril.

Estelle (without looking at him). You come to late, sir. I have been saved from deadly peril.

Noël. Pardon me; you cannot even know what the peril is. Your name is on a list of suspects.

Estelle. I know it; and I know in whose possession that list is.

Noël. Then half my errand is done; though I am at a loss to guess how you could have learnt so much.

Estelle. I have learnt many things since you were here last. I have learnt that a traitor has as candid eyes as an honest man; that the loftiest sentiments may come from the meanest soul; bewildering love-words from a heart that is a black lie.

Noël. Madame !

Estelle (turning upon him). What had I done to you, sir, that you should try to blast my life with your guilty devices ? How had I wronged you, that you should strive to wreak such vengeance upon me ? Answer me ! how had I wronged you ? Sure, I must have grievously sinned, for there is no villain on earth who would so plot against me, unless revenge impelled him !

Noël. Madame, I hear your words, but they have no meaning for me.

Estelle. Is it worth while to pretend not to understand me ? Did you, or not, profess passionate love for me but two hours since ?

Noël. Must you remind me ?

Estelle. Why ? Why ? Why ?—And I, poor silly

fool, that knew not what love was, thought this was indeed its music !

Noël. I have not come to renew my crime. I have sworn to be silent.

Estelle. But it is too late ! Why did you speak then ? Even now that I have fathomed all your baseness, I cannot look upon you and trust my senses.

Noël. Alas, be plain with me, Madame ; I do not understand ; I—I have suffered much to-night.

Estelle. Suffered ! Have you found treason where you would have staked your soul on faith ? Have you dreamt of love, only to wake to loneliness.

Noël (very sadly). Even so.

Estelle. Oh perfect villain ! (*pointing to the pass on the ground*). Cast your eyes on the ground, whence for shame's sake, they should never be lifted ; what do you see there ?

Noël (starting, but quickly controlling himself). I see the trail of the serpent.

Estelle. You see the unanswerable evidence of your vileness.

Noël. Madame, I begin to understand ; and I am no longer surprised at your anger.

Estelle. Oh, cold, unfeeling wretch ! does not that paper sear your eyes ?

Noël. Madame Beaulieu, believe me, I am deeply sorry that this paper should have given you needless pain.

Estelle. Hear him, just heaven ! He breaks a woman's heart, and calls it—needless pain !

Noël. I break your heart ! Take care, or I shall forget my oath.

Estelle. What oath ?

Noël. Never again to speak to you of my love ?

Estelle. Nay, this is too much ! Out of my presence, sir !

Noël. Ay, speak like that, and I can say what I have to. You are the victim of a villainous plot.

Estelle. I will not listen to you.

Noël. By heaven, but you shall ! I say you are surrounded with treachery.

Estelle. Do you tell me so ?

Noël. You have an implacable foe.

Estelle. Yes ! Noël Mistral !

Noël. No ! Ferrand de Chateaubel !

Estelle. Ungenerous ! Add slander to your crimes !

Noël. Heaven grant me patience ! Will you believe your eyes ? (*producing list of suspects*). This list of suspects, signed by him, and containing your name, fell into my hands.—Nay, take it ; convince yourself that I am speaking truth.

Estelle. I—do—not—understand.

Noël. Before such a weapon the only safety lies in flight—oh, not for me ! While I hold that paper he cannot touch me !—but for you. Fortunately my name stands on that list. I was thus able to force a passport out of him for myself—and my wife.

Estelle. You dare utter those words ! Alas, what matters his treachery ? It is yours that breaks my heart.

Noël. The subtle villain secured the copy I had written—which lies there.—Here is the other.

Estelle (aside). What does he mean ?

Noël. Under cover of this you can leave France in safety, but there is not an instant to lose : you must come now.

Estelle. But—your wife, sir !

Noël. Alas, is it not plain yet ? You are the wife.

Estelle. I !

Noël. Madame, you must forgive so bold a step. It was the only way to save you from his clutches.—Oh ! but have no fear ! I must perforce travel with you to the first stage beyond the frontier ; there we part : for ever.

Estelle (bewildered). But—are you not married ?

Noël. 'Slife ! if that scoundrel were here !

Estelle. Noël Mistral, answer me ! Are you not married ?

Noël (facing her angrily and proudly). Madame ! Is an answer necessary ?

Estelle. He is true !—Oh !—Noël ! (*she is about to sink into his arms*).

Noël (*coldly*). Let us waste no more words. In the narrow street behind your house my coach waits for us. You will need nothing for the journey—I have thought of everything.—Come!—every moment is precious.

Estelle. But you! You say you are not in danger!

Noël. What matters that?—Come!

Estelle. And if you even seem to fly, you will be proscribed; you will be banished from France; your future will be lost.

Noël. What matters that?—Come!

Estelle. Is all the nobility to be on your side? *Citizen Mistral*, I refuse.

Noël. Alas, madame, must I force you?

Estelle. I have been cruel enough to you, sir; I refuse to do you further mischief.

Enter Suzette C.

Suzette, Madame! Madame! Fly for your life!

Estelle. What is it?

Suzette. National guards are swarming all over the house. They have a warrant.

Estelle (*with intense horror*). Merciful heaven! My vengeance! They have come for Noël! (*to Noël*) Yes! yes! take me with you. Now you must fly for yourself! Quick! through my chamber! Quick! quick!

Noël. At last!

As Estelle opens door R two guards step out, and bar the way; at the same moment Chauffin, and two other guards enter C.

Estelle. Lost!

Chauffin. Citizen Noël, I arrest you in the name of the Republic.

Noël. By what right?

Chauffin. By right of this warrant.

Noël (*glancing at it*). Signed Ferrand—of course.

Upon what charge?

Chauffin. I am not bound to tell you, but I am a good natured creature.—Upon the charge of insulting a patriot—Me; of knocking a patriot off a table—Me again; of throwing contempt upon a patriot's speech—Me once more; of kicking a patriot—still Me!

Noël. The charge does you infinite credit.

Chauffin. Further upon the charge of speaking well of an aristo—meaning her; and of preparing for secret departure from Paris—Oh! I have been watching you, my young friend.

Noël. I am sorry you should have had so much fruitless trouble. Your warrant is worthless: here is a pass, signed by the same hand. (*hands him Ferrand's pass*).

Chauffin. Curse it, that's awkward! What's here? “with his wife”? Where is the wife?

Noël. How does that concern you?

Estelle. I am the wife!

Noël. Estelle!

Chauffin. Very pretty, very pretty; but it won't do. The citizen Ferrand means to marry this young woman. It is hardly probable that he would have obliged you with a permission to run away with her. This thing is a clumsy forgery. (*folds it up and puts it in his pocket*. *To the guards*). Citizens, do your duty.

Noël. Where do you take me?

Chauffin. To La Force.

Noël. That is a death-warrant. (*to Estelle*). Save yourself, or you will get as little mercy as I,

Estelle. Kill me, Noël; this is my doing!

Noël. Do not unman me. Forward, citizens!

Chauffin (*finding the list of suspects*). What's this? Gad! this is strange!

Noël (*eagerly*). Give me that paper!

Chauffin (*ocketting it*). Pardon me. This paper is much too valuable to be trifled with. This is a special dispensation of Providence. If my ex-marquis does haggle about my louis d'ors, here's that will make him only too glad to double them.

Noël. Now I am indeed lost.

Chauffin. I shouldn't wonder. Come, march!

Estelle. Noël, Noël, you cannot go like this! You have not spoken one word of love to me!

Noël. I have remembered my oath.

Estelle. Must I speak then? Men! take me with you! (*placing herself in front of the door*). Nay, you shall not pass! He is my husband! I love him!

Chauffin. Throw her aside!

Noël. Touch her at your peril! (genily) Estelle!
(She sinks in his arms) You have made death so easy,—
and yet so cruel! (he kisses her and turns away.) March,
comrades! (Exeunt all, but Estelle. She stands rigid a
moment; then gives a great cry, and falls forward).

CURTAIN.



ACT IV.

SCENE I. same as Act III.

Estelle (in a chair, surrounded by Madame Baudouin, Gregoire and Suzette.)

Baudouin. Hush! She is reviving!—Dear child, do you feel better?

Estelle. Air! air! Give me air! Why are you all here? Ah! I remember:—La Force! (*feverishly*) La Force! (*rises*) Yes! I must go to expiate a crime!

Baudouin. A crime?

Estelle. I have done an innocent man to death. I hasten to save him, or to die with him.

Baudouin. Are you mad?

Estelle. No! I have come to my senses! You will know all in time!—Get me a cloak.

Baudouin. Where are you going?

Estelle. To La Force.

Gregoire. Madame, it is impossible! La Force is surrounded. They massacre all who come out.

Estelle. But not all who go in. Get me a cloak, good Baudouin. (*Exeunt Mad. Baudouin and Suzette R.*) What can I do? Will tears melt the judges? (*seeing folio*) Ah! my two million livres! Will they purchase a man's life? (*takes papers out of folio*) What are these? nay, these do not concern me.—Ah! here they are. (*places packet of bank notes in her bosom, replaces other papers in folio, locks, and lays it on dressing-table*). It is worth trying. If they are merciless they shall have two victims instead of one.

Re-enter Madame Baudouin and Suzette with cloak.

Estelle. Thank you, my faithful friend.

Gregoire. I am coming with you, madame.

Estelle. No, my good Gregoire ; you must stay here, and guard the house. Indeed, I shall be safer without you ; they will not hurt an unprotected woman, who comes to save her lover.

Baudouin. Her lover ! You shall not go ! You must think of the proprieties !

Estelle (*with magnificent scorn*). The proprieties ! I think of Life !—Death !—and Love !—Farewell.

Gregoire. Madame ! (*He kneels and kisses the hem of her dress. Exit Estelle C. After a pause.*) My poor mistress ! we shall never see her again.

Baudouin. Silence ! It is time to think of ourselves

Suzette (*at the window*). A coach has driven up !

Baudouin. A coach ! Ferrand's !

Suzette. No ; no one has got out—I believe it is empty.

Baudouin (*sees paper on dressing-table*). What's this ? "The citizen Noël Mistral"—a pass ? That may be useful.

Suzette (*with a little scream*) Oh, look !

Baudouin. Lud ! how you startle one ! What now ?

Suzette. He is running as if the fiend were after him ! He has entered the house !

Baudouin. Who, child ?

Suzette. I don't know.

Enter the Abbé de Colibri, torn and muddy, his wig all awry. He sinks breathless on couch.

Abbé. Gad ! I'm out of breath !

All. The Abbé de Colibri !

Abbé. Sh ! N-n-n-no ! The *Citizen* Colibri !

Baudouin. What has happened ?

Abbé. Angel !—give me time. I have been hunted ! Gad ! how I have run !

Baudouin. Run from what ?

Abbé. The people, magnificent woman !—salts, if you love me !—My looks offended them ; my clerical suit wounded their feelings—ha ! that's better !—They have stripped me of my clerical suit. Thank heaven ! there isn't a shred of the church left on me.

Baudouin. Are they pursuing you ?

Abbé. They were; but I have so rounded, and twisted and ducked, that it would puzzle them to find me.

Baudouin. And now?

Abbé. Now, my Minerva, I come under your ægis. In other words you must hide me.

Baudouin. Nay, I have a better idea! Citizen Ferrand's coach is below—here (*indicating folio*) are two million livres—here is a pass for Noël Mistral and his wife:—what is to prevent your being Noël Mistral, and I—his wife?

Abbé. Charmer, you ate divine! Two million, did you say?

Baudouin. Yes.

Abbé. Let me feast my eyes upon them—

Baudouin. It is locked. You shall see them when we are married. Suzette! Gregoire! I leave the house in your charge.

Gregoire. Do you betray our mistress thus?

Baudouin. You simple soul!—Our poor mistress is past the reach of betrayal, by this time.

Suzette. You will need a maid, Madame; you must think of the proprieties.

Abbé. Not on my account, I vow!

Baudouin. So I shall; but if there is any difficulty about you, I shall drop you. Come!

Abbé. I bless the sovereign mob! I run away from death, and fall into the arms of fortune and—beauty.

Baudouin. This dear man! Epigrammatic in the teeth of death!

Abbé. Or matrimony! Forward!

Exeunt all but Gregoire.

Gregoire (*watching them through the window*). Now, if they had not been in such a hurry, I could have told them the folio was empty! Well, they'll have plenty of time to find it out—plenty of time. There they go. And so this is the end of the house of La Ciotat!—Alas, my poor mistress! Not three hours ago all Paris at her feet, and now only I, a useless old man, left! Ruin! ruin!

He totters out R. Enter Ferrand C.

Ferrand. Estelle!—Is the house deserted!—Estelle! No Chauffin to be found anywhere. The only hope lies in instant flight. Estelle!—Madame Baudouin!

Re-enter Gregoire R.

Gregoire. Ah! the Seigneur Ferrand! The saints be praised! Now we have found a friend!

Ferrand. Where is your mistress? Has the coach come? Has Chauffin been here?

Gregoire. Here is another of them in a hurry! Alas, sir! we are all undone! Madame Baudouin has gone with—

Ferrand. Curse Madame Baudouin! Where is your mistress?

Gregoire. Poor angel! where, indeed! I was about to tell you. Figure to yourself that the Abbé de Colibri—only he's no longer an Abbé—

Ferrand. Zounds, man! will you drive me mad? Suzette!

Gregoire. Ah! Suzette too. All faithless, sir; only I, the old servant of the family—

Enter Chauffin C.

Chauffin (advancing heartily towards Ferrand) Come, that's lucky! I have found you at last!

Ferrand. Found me, rascal! Where have you been hiding?

Chauffin. Hiding! I object to the word. I have been doing my duty.

Ferrand. You are not to touch Mistral!

Chauffin. No need to tell me that. Citizen Mistral is quite safe, and I have come for my money. I am in a hurry.

Gregoire. They are all in a hurry!

Ferrand. Insolent rogue! How is he safe?

Chauffin. I arrested him a quarter of an hour ago. He is safe in La Force. Now, my money!

Ferrand. Thou villain! What coat had he on?

Chauffin. What, you do haggle? Why should I notice his coat? It was like yours. Where is my money?

Ferrand. Did you search him?

Chauffin. No orders to search him. Arrested him

here. Could'nt search him before ladies. Come, ~~—~~ hundred louis !

Ferrand. Hundred devils ! Arrested him here !
Gregoire. Dotard, why did you not tell me this ?

Gregoire. I was about to, but you hurried me ~~—~~
That was why the Marchioness went to La Force.

Ferrand. Estelle at La Force !

Gregoire. To save him ; to save her lover. That ~~—~~
was why Madame Baudouin ran away with the Abbé ~~in~~
the coach you had hired,

Ferrand. Malediction ! Ha ! they, at least, will ~~be~~
stopped ! They had no pass.

Gregoire. Oh yes ! they had a pass for Noël Mistral
and his wife.

Ferrand. Fury !

Gregoire. And they took your folio, which they said
contained two million livres—but that was not true.

Ferrand. Yes it was true !

Gregoire. Pardon me. The Marchioness had taken
the money with her to La Force.

Ferrand. Destruction ! Is there any more ?

Gregoire. No. I think that is all. Except that
Suzette went with them.

Ferrand. Curse Suzette ! So, then, I am trapped ! All
my means of flight gone, and the list on Noël at La Force !

Chauffin. Now I might make a bargain.

Ferrand. If I had but a pistol ! What ! do I turn
coward ? No ! There is yet hope ! I am Citizen Ferrand,
of the Committee of Safety. The judges are under my
orders. To La Force ! Noël shall not be searched, and
Estelle shall yet be mine ! (to Chauffin) Out of my way !

Chauffin. Stop ! My hundred louis !

Ferrand. Out of my way, sot !

Chauffin. My hundred louis !

Ferrand. Nay, wilt thou have it ? (Strikes Chauffin
across the face, so that he staggers to the other side of the stage.
Exit Ferrand).

Chauffin (with a roar). That shall be paid for !

SCENE CHANGES.

SCENE II.

SCENE :—*Interior of the prison of La Force. A lofty vaulted hall with small grated windows high up in the black walls, through which the moonlight streams in. In the flat two doors, R.C. and L.C. The L.C. door leads to the cells. R.C. door is a rear entrance into the prison. L. enormous gates heavily barred. Whenever these are opened an infuriated crowd of men and women, armed with all kinds of weapons, is seen in the street, grouped round a huge fire which throws a lurid light upon them. R. a long table, behind which sit the three judges in tricolor scarves. Behind them on a daïs, citizens (as jury) in every variety of free and easy costume, some asleep, some drinking and smoking. On the table, in front of Chépy (the principal judge) the prison register, a few tallow candles stuck in bottles, pipes, wine, pens and ink, etc. At each end of the table sits a scrivener. All the entrances are kept by National Guards with drawn swords and torches. The great gates are further guarded by two men in blood-stained shirts. The gaoler, Baptiste, brings the prisoners in through door L.C. and remain standing beside it. In the corner L.C. at back, a group of citizens, drinking, smoking, and playing cards on a barrel. The whole scene is intended to convey an impression of grotesque horror. As the scene opens a batch of prisoners, some in the uniform of the Swiss Guards, have been condemned.*

Chépy. You have heard the sentence. Guards, do your duty.

A very old man. Mercy, gentlemen, oh! mercy!

Chépy. We deal in justice; not in mercy.

The prisoners fall sobbing on each others necks.

Bruin. This is waste of time; we have work to do. March!

Chépy. Open the gates!

The two men laboriously unbar the great gates. The prisoners shrink back.

The Man in Blue (stepping out of the group). I go first, since it must be so ! Farewell ! (he dashes his hat behind him). Which way ? Show it me, then !

The gates swing open. The mob outside give a frenzied roar. The Man in Blue dashes into their midst. The other prisoners rush wildly after him. There is the gleam of weapons and a confused clamour ; the gates are slammed with a heavy concussion, and the uproar gradually dies out.

Grissot. It is a pity we cannot dispose of the rest in batches.

Enter Baptiste L.C.

Baptiste (handing a large paper to Chépy). My president, the Act of Accusation against the prisoner lately brought in.

Chépy (examining it). Ah ! we had better take him out of his turn at once. Bring him in, Baptiste. (Exit *Baptiste L.C.*)

Grissot. Who is it ?

Chépy. Noël Mistral. According to this report a most dangerous fellow.

Bruin. We'll soon knock the nonsense out of him. Pass the bottle.

Noël is led in. He stands erect in the centre of the stage. Two guards cross their swords over his breast.

Chépy. Name ?

Noël. Noël Mistral.

Chépy. Birth-place ?

Noël. La Ciotat.

Chépy. Age ?

Noël. Twenty four.

Chépy. Profession ?

Noël. I am not sure that I have one.

Grissot. Flippant ?

Chépy. Answer my question.

Noël. Very well ; Poetry.

Bruin. Ah, bah ! That is no profession.

Grissot. Stay. Are you the author of " Margery's Marriage " ?

Noël. Yes.

Grissot. Then how come you here ?

Noël. That is for you to tell me.

The judges confer.

Chépy. Evidently a case of treason and conspiracy, Prisoner, you are charged with grossly insulting and assaulting an eloquent patriot in the midst of a fervid oration; you are further charged with attempting to escape in secret from Paris, now, in the moment of her worst peril, and of endeavouring to make use for that purpose of a pass which you have dared to forge in the handwriting of one of the most eminent patriot-citizens. What have you to say in answer to these charges ?

Grissot. And let me tell you that the truth is the only thing which will serve you.

Noël. Citizens, it is quite true that I knocked the man Chauffin off a table while he was talking.

The jury roar with rage and shake their fists at him.

Noël. But you would all have done the same. The citizen was making offensive remarks upon a person in whom I was interested.

Chépy. A woman, of course ?

Noël. If it had been a man he could have defended himself.

Grissot. Her name ?

Noël. I refuse to mention it.

Chépy. We have it here. (*Judges confer*).

Bruin. What interest have you in this person ?

Noël. The interest which any man must have, when he hears a defenceless woman abused.

Jury. Bravo ! bravo !

Bruin. No closer interest ?

Noël is silent.

Chépy. The prisoner makes no answer. (*The judges confer*).

Chépy. Assuming that you have spoken the truth, how do you explain your attempted flight from Paris ? How do you explain the forged pass ? How do you explain the fact, that you were arrested in the house of this same person on whose account you had assaulted citizen Chauffin ?

Noël. The pass was not forged.

Chépy. We have unanswerable evidence that it was. Here is the pass.

Noël. It was not forged; I can say no more.
Your other questions I cannot answer.

Chépy. Young man, consider; you stand in very grave danger. Let no false sentiment of honour induce you to conceal the truth from us.

Noël. Citizens, I am Noël Mistral. There are few here who have not heard my name. Is there one who has heard of me otherwise than as of a man zealous in the cause of liberty? My life is before you; my written words are the best evidence in my favour; you can hear my songs from the lips of the people; what do they breathe but a quenchless thirst for Freedom? Such is my public life. To-night my private interests have brought me to this pass, that I must seem guilty of falsehood, of cowardice, and of treason to my country. I cannot help it; I am innocent. I will answer no further questions.

Movement among the jury.

Chépy. You confess that you are intimately associated with aristocrats; you confess that your private interests are at variance with your public character: a good citizen has no private interests! It is just from such men as you that the state has most to fear! (to jury). How say you? Guilty or innocent?

Confused cries of "Guilty" and "Innocent." Enter Ferrand R.C. *He remains in the background.*

Chépy. The jury are divided. We cannot, therefore, pronounce sentence upon the prisoner. Let him be conducted to La Salprière. Open the gates.

Bruin. Stay! Has the prisoner been searched?

Baptiste. No, citizen.

Bruin. Let him be searched before he is sent out.

Ferrand *hurries to Chépy and whispers to him.*

Noël. Ferrand!

Chépy (to Ferrand). Certainly.—The prisoner is not to be searched.

Bruin (angrily). Why not?

Chépy. I am not bound to give reasons for my orders.

Bruin (turning to jury). Citizens, will you suffer this? Is this ex-marquis to tyrannise over the court?

Jury. Down with the aristocrat! Search the prisoner!

Ferrand makes for the door R.C.

Grissot. Where is the citizen going?

Bruin. Guard the door!

Guards bar the door, R.C.

Ferrand. What does this insolence mean? Do you know who I am?

Bruin (lighting his pipe). Perfectly. You are citizen Ferrand, and I am citizen Bruin. There isn't a pin to choose between us.

Ferrand. You are trying to protect the prisoner.

Bruin. If you repeat that remark, I will have you put in irons. On the contrary, I suspect we hold a clue to a very pretty plot, which perhaps you know something of.

Ferrand. Do you make me a prisoner?

Bruin. Not at all. (pointing to the gates) There is the way out.

The mob outside howl. The jury laugh. Ferrand shrinks into a corner and watches the search with keen anxiety. Guards surround Noël so that he is out of sight of the audience.

Baptiste (emerging from the group). There is absolutely nothing to be found.

Ferrand (with a surprised sigh of relief). Ha! Now, citizen Bruin, are you satisfied?

Bruin (sulkily). Remove the prisoner.

Ferrand (to Noël). Shall I take a message to your—wife?

Chépy. Open the gates!

The gates are flung open. The mob howls and brandishes weapons.

Noël. You have condemned an innocent man to a horrible death. On your heads be my blood!

Ferrand. Go forth, poet of the people! The people await you!

Baptiste. Come, march!

Chépy. Bring the next prisoner.

As Noël prepares to face the mob there is a movement among them. Cries of "Make way for the maid!" "She's come for her sweetheart!" "Courage, my pretty!" Estelle

bursts through the crowd, dishevelled and bleeding, rushes into the prison and throws herself at the feet of the judges. The mob cheer, and surge towards the gates.

Estelle. Mercy! Mercy!

Noël. Estelle!

The judges and jury rise in great excitement. The card-players leave their game and come and look on.

Chépy. Shut the gates! Quick! (The gates are slammed in the face of the mob, who howl) What does this mean?

Estelle. Good citizens! I come for justice and mercy!

Chépy. On whose behalf?

Estelle. On behalf of Noël Mistral.

Chépy. Who are you?

Estelle. I am Estelle de Beaulieu.

Movement among the crowd.

Chépy. Ah! This is interesting. What have you to urge?

Estelle. Nothing but a prayer for mercy. He is here because he tried to save me from danger.

Noël. Estelle!

Chépy. From what danger?

Estelle. My name was on a list of suspects, and he came to help me to fly from Paris.

Chépy. So the prisoner was conniving at the escape of an aristocrat?

Estelle. Alas! What have I said? The list was the act of an enemy—nay, what is the use of words? You would never understand—I throw myself upon your mercy—you are men, you must have human hearts—I love him! If you condemn him, I shall die with him, but you will not—

Chépy. Enough! You have no new facts. Remove the prisoner.

Estelle. Oh; Mercy! Mercy! Wait! wait! I had forgotten! Here are two million livres! I cast them at your feet; only let my lover go free!

Bruin. She tries to bribe the Republic!

Chépy. Patience. Whence is all this money?

Estelle. It is the indemnity for my estates which have been confiscated.

The judges confer excitedly. Chépy refers to a list.

Ferrand. Do not listen to her! She is mad!

Estelle. Are you there? (to judges) He can bear witness to my words—He brought me the money.

Chépy. The mystery is getting ever deeper. Citizen Beaulieu, it is my duty to remind you that your estates have not been touched. Your explanation of this sum is, therefore, false.

Estelle. Ask citizen Ferrand for a better one - it is all I can give. Ask him whether I have spoken truth about the list of suspects?

Chépy. (to Ferrand). Citizen, you hear what this woman says. How do you answer?

Ferrand. I will not answer the ravings of a mad-woman.

Chépy. Do you know anything of this money?

Ferrand. Nothing.

Chépy. Or of the list of suspects?

Ferrand. Nothing. It is a plot to destroy me. Let her produce the list!

Chépy. Estelle Beaulieu you are very strongly suspected of conspiring against citizen Ferrand, whose patriotism is above suspicion.

Estelle. Alas, what toils am I in!

Noël. I bear witness! I have seen the list—

Chépy. Silence, prisoner!

Ferrand (to Estelle) If I save him, will you marry me?

Estelle. Is this another trick?

Ferrand. Will you?

Estelle. No!

Ferrand. Think! It is your last chance!

Estelle. I will die with him! I will not live with you!

Ferrand. Fool!

Estelle (suddenly turning to jury). Hear me, citizens! This man who calls me mad, and who professes to know nothing, says he can save my lover if I will marry him!

The jury express angry surprise. Enter Chauffin R.C. He gets behind Bruin.

Grissot (angrily). What does this mean? Citizen, do you know anything in the prisoner's favour?

Ferrand (coldly). I have said ; I know nothing.

Bruin. Is this pass in your writing ?

Ferrand. It is not.

Chépy. What more can we want ?

Chauffin whispers to Bruin. Ferrand starts on seeing him.

Bruin. 'Sdeath !—(to Ferrand) Citizen, once more, do you know anything of the list of suspects mentioned by this witness ? (indicating Estelle)

Estelle. Noël ! we shall yet be saved ! (She clings to him).

Ferrand. I know nothing !

Chauffin. (producing the list and handing it to Bruin). Ask him if this is a forgery.

Bruin (examining the list). What is this ? Gad ! President, this will interest you ! (hands the list to Chépy).

Chépy. My name here ! (to Chauffin). Who is this man ? Stand forward ! (Chauffin comes C.)

Ferrand. Silence, dog !

Chauffin. Ah, I've licked your boots long enough ! Now I show my teeth.

Chépy. Tell the court all you know.

Chauffin. My Lords !—I mean, Citizens ! This Ferrand had hoped to marry Estelle de Beaulieu, but the prisoner Mistral got in his way ; so, as time was precious, he put their names on that list of suspects, in the hope of ridding himself of his rival, and of so working on the woman's fears as to force her to marry him ; for, if all had gone well, he could easily have saved her from any real danger.

Chépy. Had he any valid accusation against the prisoner ?

Chauffin. None whatever.

Chépy. Do you know whence these two million livres came ?

Chauffin. I should be surprised if they did not come from the public treasury.

Chépy. You are interesting. Is this pass a forgery ?

Chauffin. It is genuine.

Grissot. But in the act of accusation you declare it to be a forgery.

Chauffin. That was a—mistake.

Chépy. And what is your share in all this ?

Chauffin. Mine ! I have no share in it whatever ! I just happen to know !

Chépy. You happen to know too much. We will make further enquiries. Remove this man to the cells.

Chauffin. I am Chauffin, the Incorruptible ! I have done nothing !

Baptiste. Come on, comrade !

Chauffin (struggling). This comes of trying to serve my country ! Curse your Republic !

The jury laugh. Chauffin is dragged out howling, L.C.

Chépy. So, citizen Ferrand, the money you know nothing of you have stolen ; the list you know nothing of is signed by you ; the pass you said was a forgery is genuine. What have you to say ?

Ferrand. It is all a plot !

Chépy. So it seems. We have no time to unravel it here. Remove the citizen to La Salpêtrière !

Ferrand (horror-struck). Through that crowd !

Chépy. Open the gates !

The gates are opened. Mob as before.

Ferrand (in a paroxysm of terror). Mercy ! Mercy ! Citizen Bruin !—Citizen Chépy !

Chépy. Miserable man ! Here stands my name !

Ferrand. Mistral, plead for me ! Estelle, entreat them !

Chépy. Guards, do your duty !

Noël (to the judges). Citizens—

Chépy. Silence, prisoner !

Estelle. Will you hear me ?

Chépy. We will hear no one. Out with him !

Ferrand (to Estelle). Then, by heaven, you shall come with me ! (*He makes for her, but is stopped by the guards. Excitement of bystanders.*) What ! no vengeance ! *He stands for a moment irresolute ; then, shielding his eyes with his arms and with a wild gesture of despair, he leaps headlong into the mob, who greet him with a yell. The gates are slammed.*)

Chépy. That's a relief. Now, with respect to the citizen Mistral and the woman Beaulieu, what are we to do ?

The judges confer. The refrain of Noël's song is heard outside, and cheers from the mob. Heavy blows resound at the gates.

Noël. Estelle! look up! we are saved!

Chépy. What new interruption is this?

The gates are burst open with a crash. Enter the Marseillaise, headed by Castellan, Costalde, and Benizet, armed. The mob follows them in, crowding the prison; picturesque effect of torches, weapons, etc.

Chépy (indignant). What does this mean?

Castellan. It means, citizens, that we have come for our Noël. We have not marched all the way from Marseilles only to assist at his murder!

The crowd cheer. Cries of "Mistral! Mistral!"

Chépy. This is most irregular.

Bruin. Let them have him.

Grissot (shouting). But he is a royalist!

Castellan. Bah! Old stick-i'-the-mud! The man whose song of Freedom will stir the hearts of all posterity, a royalist!

The crowd hoot.

Chépy (to the jury). How say you? Guilty? or innocent?

Jury (yelling). Innocent!

Crowd. Noël! Noël!

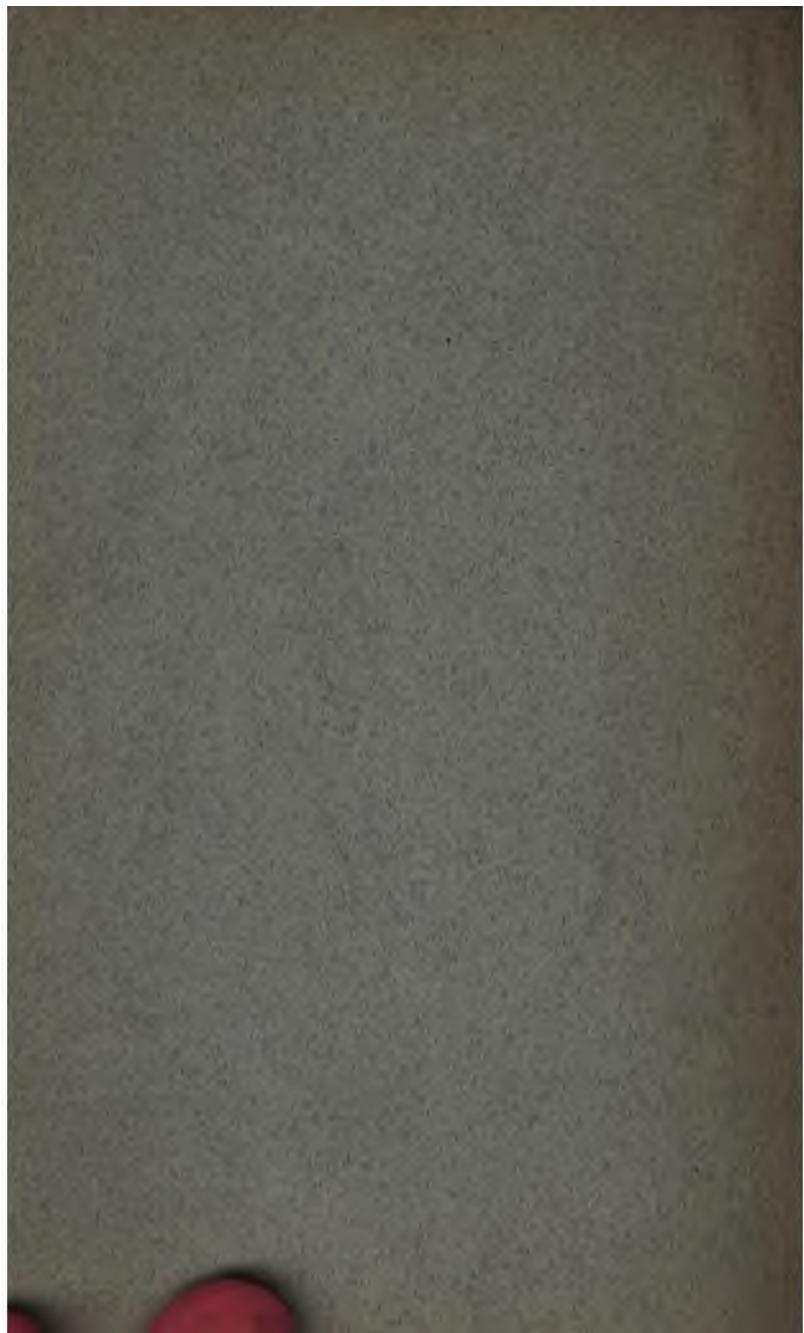
Noël. Hush, Brothers! She has fainted. Estelle, my love, the danger has passed, the night has fled, we are free to walk into the dawn. Heavens! she is wounded! Quick! give me a scarf to bind about her arm! Estelle!

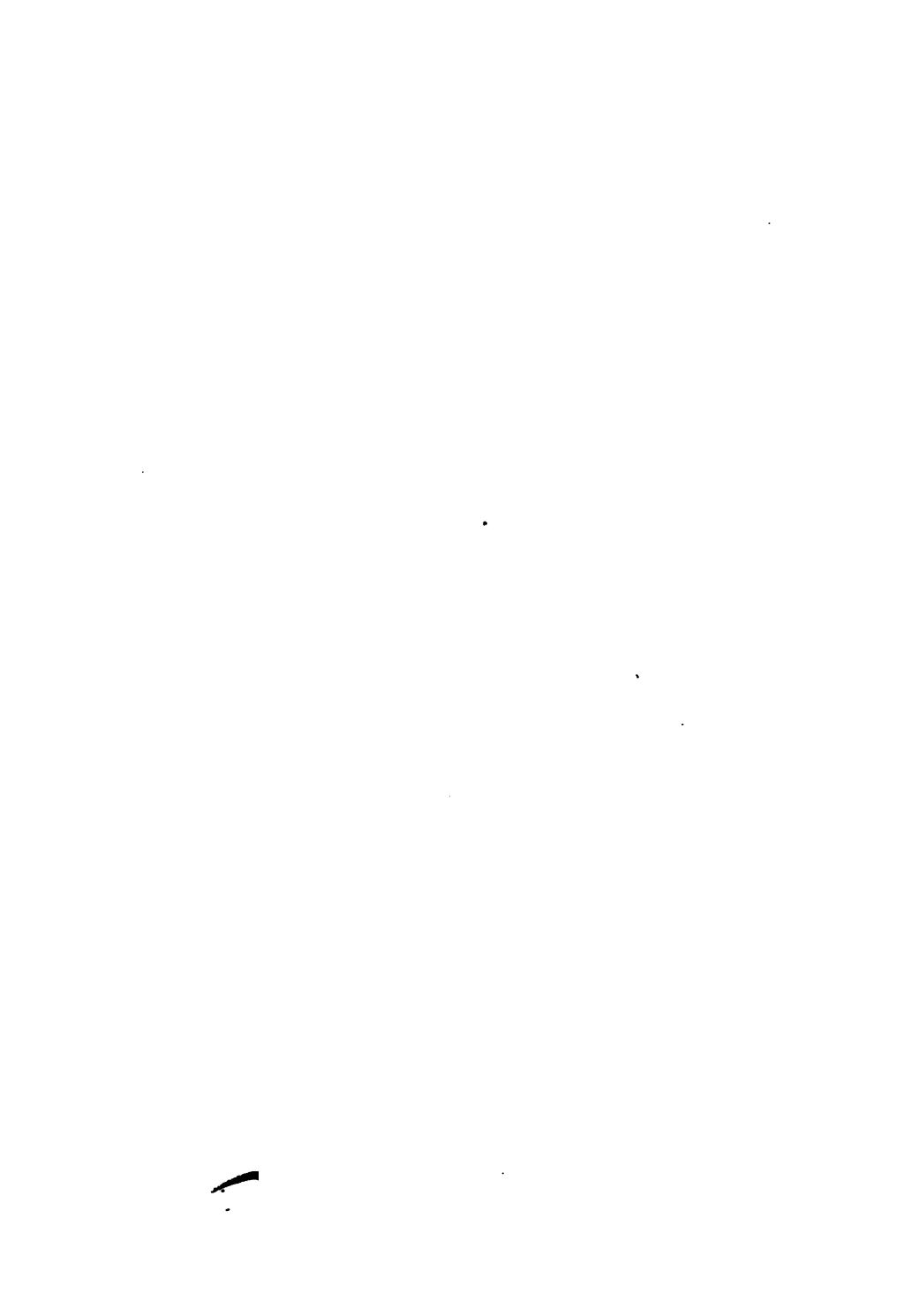
Estelle (reviving, produces the lute-ribbon). Noël—bind it with this: in a—LOVE-KNOT.

CURTAIN.









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